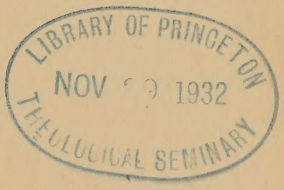

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Where wisdom hides

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WHERE WISDOM HIDES

WHERE WISDOM HIDES

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BY

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WHERE WISDOM HIDES

WHERE WISDOM HIDES

There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:
Whence cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?
Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.
God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.
And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

—Job 28:7, 20, 21, 23, 28.

I

This remarkable chapter from which our text is chosen shows the writer to have been well acquainted with the mining methods of his day. He had seen the deep shaft sunk far from the busy highways of life. He was familiar with the swinging cage, the descent into the depths of the earth, the drive through the solid face of rock, the discovery of the precious metal, the patient pursuit, lantern in hand, of the gold-bearing reef through all its devious wanderings,

and even the damming back of the waters that threatened to flood the workings. Indeed, every detail is so set forth that no one without an inside knowledge of a miner's life and work could have written it. Under cover of this mining metaphor the writer of this drama would set forth the truth, that just as the underground wealth of the earth is hidden from the keenest vision of bird and beast, so the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are veiled from the eye of man. They lie beneath the surface of the things we touch and see; and just as gold and silver and precious stones await the pick and shovel of the miner before they can be seen and their value appraised, so the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which "eye hath not seen" await the revealing word of God before they can be perceived and appropriated by the soul of man.

This is the force of our text. The "path that no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen" is the deep underground drive of the mine where the secret wealth of the earth is stored: and it is employed to symbolize the path that no unspiritual man has ever seen, the hid-

den wealth of which no arithmetic can compute, and the lustre of whose gems can never be tarnished by the vandal touch of time. The contrast between the abiding wealth of this heavenly wisdom and the perishing currency of earth is here set forth in terms which for literary grace and beauty have rarely been equalled and never surpassed. Now the point I desire to make and which is the clear teaching of the text is that while the bird's-eye view is all very well for the bird it is not enough for you and me. The bird requires sight but not insight; observation but not penetration; vision extensive, not intensive. But we are not birds; we are of more consequence than many birds. Thus it comes to pass that in our case, breadth of view has to be supplemented by depth of insight else superficiality of vision will induce superficiality of thought.

Our reflectives are fed by our perceptives, but if we never perceive anything but the merest surface of things, if we never pierce the outer and material crust to find the inner and informing spirit, then our thought life, which is our

real life, will be starved of its staple diet. Ours will become a mere butterfly existence, bounded by the cradle and the grave, with no past on which to improve and with no future to inspire. Our bird's-eye vision may be accurate as far as it goes; it may take in a very wide sweep of the landscape, its cities, its temples, its factories, its farms, its fertile fields, its orchards, the long reach of river and the flowing curves of the purple hills; but as to the mystic potency that dwells behind all this beauty and of which it is merely the expression, as to the unseen hand that throws the shuttles that day and night unceasingly weave the web of this wondrous and many-coloured tapestry, it may all the time be blind, totally blind. We can become so absorbed in the temporal as to have no eye for the spiritual, so engrossed in the things we touch and see as to forget that they are but the passing and perishing symbols of things not seen and eternal. We grow so materialistic that we set no value on anything that cannot, if need be, be turned into cash.

We say and believe that a bird in the hand

is worth two in the bush; whereas, if we only had less wood in our heads and less stone in our hearts we should see that one bird in the bush whose liquid notes usher in the dawn with matin song and set the pulses beating to the quick-step of the spring is worth a million feathered captives in whose throats the fountain of song has run dry. "Oh," you say, "that all depends upon the viewpoint." Excuse me, it all depends upon the view *power*. Give the unspiritual man the finest point of view imaginable, set him down amid scenes of most enchanting beauty—the pomp of setting suns, the wistful tenderness of the dawn, the great march past of the seasons, the shy advance of spring, the confident step of summer, the autumn loitering as though self-conscious of her splendour in crimson and gold, the white winter girt round with her virginal and unapproachable sanctity of snow, the league-long roller thundering on the beach, and, overarching all, the midnight splendour of the starry skies—and while it is true that he may react to their beauty and be thrilled with a rapture too deep for words, yet to him they are

simply natural phenomena, molecules in more or less activity under vibrating laws, and to his mind adequately explained when he has invented a formula which expresses their actions and reactions in mathematical terms.

But if you think for a moment, this very word "terms" at once indicates boundary lines. Now science by scientific methods can deal only with what lies within the boundaries of our sense impressions. Karl Pearson has defined science as: "A classified index to the successive pages of sense impression which enables us readily to find what we want but in no wise accounts for the peculiar contents of that strange book of life." Bosanquet reminds us that "every science, as we read in Aristotle, assumes its subject matter and does not give an account of it." Here then are the acknowledged limitations of science. With anything that will not submit to analysis, with forces that do not report themselves to any of the five senses, physical science is incompetent to deal. Anything that is beyond their range is by her own confession outside her province. She follows phenomena right

down to their vanishing point, but the point of disappearance from view must on no account be regarded as identical with the point of disappearance from being. No scientist of any repute would ever assume, much less affirm, that because he had come to the end of his tether in any given line of research that therefore he had come to the end of the matter under investigation. He knows there is always a beyond and that the only reason he is compelled to quit his quest is that he has no sense subtle enough, no instruments sufficiently delicate wherewith to pursue the search into that rarefied atmosphere out of which all things emerge and into which they all retreat.

A scientific definition thus simply marks a boundary line between the known and the at present unknown. Concerning that unknown, in the name of science nothing can positively be affirmed. To know anything of it we must drop the pedestrian method of science, we must leave the ground and take the wings of faith, for as J. S. Haldane, one of the greatest living biologists, reminds us: "A person is no mere physical

body among other bodies, no mere living organism, but a spiritual being, which neither physical nor biological conceptions are capable of representing."

Thus it is coming to pass that our high priests of science are among the first to endorse the teaching of our text, that there is a world of spiritual facts and forces within which we are ensphered. To know that world, to come into correspondence with it, to be harmonized to its laws, to partake of its spirit, to be one with it, to be working in it and have it working in us, is to know the rapture of the sons of God. That world is all about us now, it is closer to us than breathing; we need not go out to seek it. Nay! It is seeking us in the person of the Incarnate Love, whom to know is everlasting life. That love is standing over against our lives even now and fain would enter in to uplift and transform them. Listen! "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." When we think of what it will mean in the way of liquidation and recon-

struction in these lives of ours to have Him reside and preside within, are we prepared to give Him the freedom of our hearts? Let us go away quietly into the silence of our own souls and think this over, for it has its price:

"If love should count you worthy, and should deign
One day to seek your door and be your guest,
Pause! ere you draw the bolt and bid him rest,
If in your old content you would remain;
For not alone he enters; in his train
Are angels of the mist, the lonely quest,
Dreams of the unfulfilled and unpossessed,
And sorrow, and Life's immemorial pain.
He wakes desires you never may forget,
He shows you stars you never saw before,
He makes you share with him, for evermore,
The burden of the world's divine regret.
How wise you were to open not! and yet,
How poor if you should turn him from the door!"[1]

II

We saw in our last study that the path indicated in our text was the underground drive

[1] S. R. Lysaght, *Poems of the Unknown Way.*

of the mine and that just as its treasures of gold or gems lie concealed in darkness that no eye of bird or beast can pierce, so the penetration of the spiritual kingdom, the hidden things of God, His relation to us and ours to Him, with all the implications and mutual obligations that these enfold and involve, lie far beneath the surface of things and have to be sought under the impulse and direction of that Spirit "who searches all things—yea, the deep things of God."

The whole ministry of the visible is to suggest and quicken our interest in the invisible. That it so often fails is not its fault but ours. We are content to remain in the outer court of the temple when we might pass through the veil and dwell in the holiest of all. We are satisfied with symbols, while what is symbolized we treat with disregard. We are so absorbed with the things of sense that those of the spirit have no chance with us. It is only in great crises of panic or disorder, of disease or death, that the great things of life are forced upon our reluctant vision. In these revealing moments the great basic verities are laid bare, the veil of the visible

gets rudely rent, and the spiritual makes its appeal to us in voices which demand to be heard. An appeal, alas! too often rendered futile in advance, because it is made to faculties that have deteriorated through long disuse. In dealing with such matters we require a totally different kind of keenness from that which is called for in the market and the exchange. You city men with your finely trained faculty for high finance, you who are gifted with an almost uncanny prescience in regard to wheat and wool, coal and iron, steel and oil, stocks and shares, options and futures, gluts and shortages, you who

> "Know the seasons when to take
> Occasion by the hand and make
> The bounds of commerce wider yet,"

will be slow to believe me when I tell you that all your cuteness and Wall Street wit which make distant exchanges wait for the word that may shake or stabilize the markets of the world, all this high-power proficiency, this big business capacity, which makes you captains of industry and princes of commerce in the world of men,

will not advance you one single step in things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. In these matters of the spirit, in spite of all your cleverness, you could be easily outclassed by your own little child—"for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"—while the simplest homesteader on the land whose heart is right with God and has learned to hold communion with the Unseen Holy would leave you leagues behind. A business proposition such as you could settle at a moment's thought as easily and as automatically as you pull up your socks would, of course, daze him into a deaf and dumb bewilderment; but, on the other hand, what would be A B C to him in the realm of spiritual perception and interpretation would plunge you into hopeless perplexity, without the shadow of a clue.

The fact is that these things are of the spirit, and they must be spiritually discerned. This realm calls for an order of faculties quite distinct from those that function on the material plane. Intellectual smartness, business sagacity, the bargain-hunting instinct, and gain-making gifts generally find no field here in which to dis-

play their powers. They are not at home. They have no relativity to this realm. They provoke no reaction from it. They are dead to it. Between our sense faculties and that world there is a great gulf fixed. Here then is a group of facts and forces at work entirely different from those which in this work-a-day world we are accustomed to handle and direct. It is a world of different values. Things that some of you in your practical business way would just wave aside as trifles light as air, if placed in the scales of that world, would not only outweigh the solid earth on which we tread, but would make the entire material universe kick the beam; while on the other hand the things that weigh so heavily in this world's estimation would by the standards of that world prove but dust and chaff which the wind driveth away.

Here is a realm that refuses to yield up its secret to any but the pure in heart. You may have the keenness of a hawk or the vision of a vulture for the things of time and sense and yet be blind as a bat and deaf as an adder to the visions and voices of the spiritual order. This is

no reflection on your intelligence. It is not a question of deficient culture, but of congenital defect. Now a congenital physical defect, say like colour blindness, can never be cured. One suffering this deprivation would have to be born again in order to see the kingdom of colour in all its sevenfold splendour, and the necessity for being born again upon which Christ insisted has its ground just here. The spiritual man is *born,* not *made* by natural heredity, education, or environment. And just as the tiniest insect that lives but a day knows more about light and heat and moisture than the mightiest mass of non-living matter that ever was piled 'twixt earth and sky, so the least in the Kingdom of God is wiser than the most advanced in knowledge who stands outside its gates.

Now, the outsider as to the new Kingdom naturally resents the suggestion that through lack of any faculty he is disqualified from receiving or pronouncing upon the nature or value of the facts and forces of the spiritual world. The more so that many who are acknowledged experts in matters of the spirit cannot compare

for native mentality or acquired proficiency in science, philosophy, or art with men of the world. Their claim to be the recipients of direct impressions and communications from the Spirit of God, along what might be termed a private wire, while refusing to submit to what is known as a scientific test, is scouted as a piece of pharisaic affectation, or at best the hallucination of an unbalanced mind.

But is there any question upon which such an array of sane and level-headed witnesses could be subpœnaed to give evidence? The testimony that can be adduced is so universal and overwhelming that in order to discredit it we should have to put all the saints and sages of the centuries in the wrong. On this hypothesis Abraham and Moses, Samuel and Elijah, Isaiah and Daniel, Matthew and Mark, Luke and John, Peter and Paul, Augustine, Calvin, Huss and Wycliffe, Luther and Knox, Wesley and Whitefield, Booth and Moody—not excluding even Jesus Christ Himself—were liars all. You would have some difficulty in impanelling a jury even from among unbelievers who would be

prepared to reverse the verdict of history on such characters as these. Paul said long ago that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned." The trouble is that the natural man is disposed to distrust any alleged facts that will not submit themselves to scientific test or that profess to come along other than physical lines. It is always difficult to drop methods of proof that have been successfully employed in one realm, when we step over into another, where a totally different set of conditions prevails.

So it comes to pass that those who know what the search for truth means in the material realm —how they have "followed knowledge like a sinking star, beyond the utmost bounds of human thought"—who have had to dig and delve and sweat and swelter to win the secrets of the earth and sea and air, cannot understand how these methods can be forsaken with success in other realms. They want to bring across into the region of the spirit the same implements of

research which they have so successfully employed in the world of matter, and are quite disappointed and indeed suspicious in finding that they do not work. You can neither burrow nor barge, neither bribe nor bully your way into the Kingdom of God. You must be born into it with a different pair of eyes and ears and a different sense of touch and taste from any with which you pick up the vibrations of light and sound, of feeling and flavour in the everyday work-a-day world.

Now, to be born either for the first or second time is about the most quiescent thing that one can do—if indeed one can be said to do it at all. "Born" is purely a passive verb. It implies something done *for* us, not *by* us. So that when in the Scripture we have already quoted Christ says, "Ye must be born again," the implication is that there must be on our part simple submission to be in some mysterious way carried over from one kingdom to another and by some power other than our own. In order to realize the genesis of the new life the soul has to submit itself to Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost comes upon it, the

power of the Highest overshadows it, and lo! it is born of the Spirit. In one swift moment it is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

But the change is *subjective* as well as *objective*. In the passage across we are made over again, so to speak. We are either invested with a new set of faculties, or else a dormant group of powers become suddenly quickened into activity and made to react to a new world—a world of spiritual reality to which they are related and whose vibrations they learn to pick up and interpret, just as physical hearing and sight pick up the vibrations of sound and light. We have to commence here, as in the world of common things, with the rudiments. In the rudiments most of us remain, lingering on in the kindergarten stage of development—the despair of the Church and the derision of the world. "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The alphabet of that realm is revealed in the last verse of this chapter. It is flashed across to the soul that places itself in receptive relation. "Behold the fear of

the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." "Fear" here means "reverence," and is inclusive of love, holds it indeed capsulate in its heart. The highest love is ever based in the deepest reverence. We cannot truly love that which we do not revere.

An obedience that has its first beginnings in a slavish fear of punishment may, nevertheless, in its later activities and developments become the spontaneous outcome of a life that has fallen in love with holiness and broken off with sin. Thus will be fulfilled the Scripture: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Note—merely the beginning, the end of which will be that self-forgetting, overmastering love which will be the fulfilment of the law. The child in the home is restrained at first from wrongdoing through fear of suffering pain. Later on he refrains through fear of giving pain. The second fear is the fear that love begets and is consonant with the most perfect filial affection. If any of us once had the vision and through selfishness and sin have blurred its beauty, let us seek its restoration and, taking

with us words, let us cry to Him who is Lord and Master of us all:

"Give to my eyes refreshing tears,
Give to my heart chaste holy fires,
Give to my soul, with filial fears,
The love that all heaven's host inspires.
That all my powers with all their might
In Thy sole glory may unite."

III

The fear of God is the very alphabet not only of religion but of science. All writers on comparative religion are agreed that fear in one or other of its phases ranging from the reverential awe of the spiritually cultured mind to the abject terror of the savage exhibited in the lowest forms of animism lies at the base of every religious system. In like manner, if a history of scientific investigation could be compiled setting forth all the trial and failure methods adopted by the pioneers of research and discovery in the realm of natural law, it would be found that the fear of Nature had been one of the prime factors prompting her priests to push behind the veil.

Man feels so afraid of the destructive forces that everywhere beset him that he must, if possible, have them on his side. All our education in the science of physical well-doing in order to physical well-being has its start in this fear of Nature, which, of course, whether recognized as such or not, is fear of the Lord. Natural law, with its consequent penalties for neglect or violation, has thus been our schoolmaster in the physical sciences. Under its scourge we have come to our present knowledge and command of the forces that flow around us and that, according to our behaviour, extend to us a thousand helping or hindering hands.

Slowly and painfully, taught by disease and disaster, man has come to some sort of working understanding as to the nature and conditions of the realm into which he has been thrust. He very soon discovers to his cost that it is no loose and slipshod system with which he has to do. He is entered upon a graduating course under the tutorship of laws and forces that will make no allowances, accept no excuses, permit no infringements. They can never be bluffed or

bribed into any kind of connivance at delinquency, so that the slightest lapse is strictly entered up and charged against the delinquent. The pupil in this school very soon finds that fire burns, acids bite, and water drowns both saint and sinner alike, and without any discrimination as to whether they sin in ignorance or against the clearest light. Indeed, they may go wrong with the very best and most humane motives, but no exceptions are allowed. Even Christ Himself could not deliberately violate the law of gravity with any expectation that it would be suspended in his favour and that angels would come in between Him and the ground. Gravity is gravity, to the religious man as to the irreligious, and it must be obeyed. It will pull down a church if it is not plumb, and it will hold up a gambling hell if it is.

This is the kind of régime under which man has been placed, and his wisdom is to adjust himself to its hard-and-fast requirements, to conform to the fixed and inflexible conditions of his mortal state. Now, we have learned a little and are still learning bit by bit the secret of

adjustment. We are, however, but slow and backward scholars; but slow as we are in gaining knowledge we are slower still in the practice of what we know. Of the thousand fatalities that daily occur how few are due to ignorance! Nine out of ten result from running dead against the light and knowledge of the years. When we pit ourselves against Nature we play a losing game. Her laws move on relentlessly and never waver a hair's breadth from their predetermined track. If we want them to help us we must get into step with them and go their way. To fear Nature, then, that is wisdom, on the merely earthly plane, and to obey natural law is as much a moral obligation as to observe the Ten Commandments, and this is a lesson that we have had to learn at infinite cost of treasure and life.

The pathway of human progress in the knowledge of the things we touch and see is white with the bones of those who have fallen by the way, those who through ignorance or perversity have stepped athwart the lines of law and been crushed or flung aside, broken and undone. Now it is our dread of this system so in-

exorable, so inflexible, so insistent and persistent in its demands, that has made us wise to all obedience. We know that the nature of things cannot be trifled with and that every attempt to combat it can only react on ourselves, bearing us down or wearing us down so that in opposition we have not a hope. There can be no question that the observed certainty with which Nature exacts her dues begets obedience to her laws. Such a statement may seem derogatory to our dignity as human beings and anything but flattering to our self-respect by making us appear responsive only to the lowest of motives, but what of that? What is the use of being complimentary at the expense of candour? It is no use fooling ourselves with lying words. The main reason why sane people do not mess round with poisons, or play with loaded revolvers, or violate traffic regulations, or step out of twenty-story windows, or picnic on railway tracks, or try to walk on the Hudson, or run any of the countless and needless risks in every walk of life, is simply because they are afraid of offending Nature's laws. They know that every

offence is strictly marked, and where the penalty invariably follows the offence the bravest will fear to transgress.

It is the idlest of all idle nonsense to say that we ought to appeal always to the highest motives and that men ought to be obedient for obedience' sake. The fact remains that they are not and will not, and we have to deal with human nature as it is and not as it ought to be. How many of you business men would be content to rest your hopes of getting in your next month's accounts on an appeal to the higher motives of men? Ask yourselves, suppose we abolished all police and penalties and prisons, how many debts would be discharged, how many contracts carried out, how much order would prevail, how much safety could be secured? You know very well that such an abolition would open the flood gates of lawlessness and vice and turn human life into a hell.

It comes to this, then: that fear of penalty is a motive that in the present condition of society we cannot afford to ignore; and our only hope is that in the upward evolution of the social

organism toward a higher plane it may come to pass that newer and more noble motives may displace the old, and that fear of punishment may pass into love of law. Let it be clearly seen and firmly held that we never could have come to the wisdom which the centuries have bequeathed, and which stands expressed in applied science and inventions, had we been allowed to do as we desired without restraint or fear in a disorderly universe of lawless forces where everything was everyhow. Suppose, for example, that fire and water, acids and gases, did not always behave in the same way under the same conditions, they could have no educational value for us. Suppose that electricity sometimes observed and sometimes disobeyed the laws of insulation, we could not possibly handle it. As it is, however, we can safely utilize its power and turn it to innumerable ends. But think of the centuries during which it hovered round, an unutilized because a misunderstood and dreaded force.

We have learned all we know about all the forces of Nature through countless deaths and

disablements. Every insulated wire, every protective measure we adopt, every insurance we effect against accident, disease, and fire and flood, is the expressed and organized wisdom of man gained under the scourge of fear in Nature's schoolhouse—a schoolhouse roofed and floored, walled and lined, braced and bolted with laws, within the circle of whose play obedience means not only safety, which after all is merely passive and negative, but positive efficiency and executive ability which is active and becomes an open sesame to all the entreasured wealth of earth and air and sea.

Now, one cannot thus put himself to school with Nature without very soon acquiring respect for his teacher. Stern and without sentiment though she be, yet she is also without favouritism and incorruptibly just! Newton's third law states this in scientific language: "Reaction is always equal and opposite to action. The actions of two bodies on each other are always equal and in opposite directions." This is simply the law of justice expressed in physical terms. We always revere justice even when its decisions are

against us, and until we have satisfied it we cannot be at rest. Plato pointed this out four centuries before Christ and in the *Gorgias* he affirms the absolute supremacy of justice as illustrated in the case of Socrates versus the Athenian world. He shows that it is infinitely better for the wrongdoer to be punished than for him to escape. As a matter of fact, according to Plato, when the transgressor sees his sin in its true light he will hasten to surrender himself as a prisoner to the eternal justice and by accepting his punishment be set at one with the violated law.

This regard for what is true and just, then, is an organic instinct of our nature. Even the little child when wronged demands the restitution of its rights. The schoolboy will forgive anything in his master but injustice. I have it from Archbishop Temple's own son that when his father was as yet but head master of Rugby a letter came into his hands which he valued above rubies. It was a letter that one of the boys had sent home to his father, who, thinking Temple

might appreciate it, sent it along for the principal's perusal. It ran thus:

"Dear Father:
"Temple is a beast, but he is a just beast!"

Temple never parted with that letter. He felt that such a testimony was a schoolmaster's truest crown.

Nature, then, is just, but she is not only just, she is generous. Her action when we oppose her laws is not merely retributive, it is likewise remedial. If for our disobedience she imposes certain disabilities in the way of physical damage she does not leave it at that. Running side by side with the correction there is always a process of recovery. Even in the normal wear and tear of everyday life she is always busy at her work of repairing waste and building up what during our working hours we are breaking down. It would be quite a mistake to think of Nature as being merely on the watch for defaulters and concerned only with exacting from delinquents her dues. Her recuperative and restorative agencies are everywhere and always at work, and numer-

ous illustrations might be cited, but we have time for only one. Take for example the bone builders of the body—the "osteoblasts," as they are scientifically called. Now, according to physiologists these minute creatures have delegated to them the task of building up the bone structure of the body. Let us take the thigh bone for the purpose of our illustration. Dr. Arthur Keith in his work *The Engines of the Human Body* has shown that in the course of the upbuilding of this, the largest bone in the body, from first to last some one hundred and fifty millions of these tiny organisms are at work as builders. When, however, their work is finished and the structure is full grown, instead of being demobilized these osteoblasts are retained as repairers, and should any break occur in the bone, flying gangs of them at once rush to the point of damage and immediately begin to bridge the fracture.

Thus, with regard to Nature, that which was once merely feared comes, when it is understood, to be deeply revered. A new sense of wondering and almost worshipping awe possesses the cul-

tured mind that dwells close to Nature's heart. The ignorant terror of the primitive man is conquered and displaced by a new and nobler sentiment. We no longer regard the system of Nature as a kind of demiurge that has to be placated by sacrifice, but as the organized will of God—a cluster of friendly forces, hovering round our path and offering their willing necks to our yoke, calling to us indeed with ten thousand voices: "Prepare ye our way, make straight our path and we will work your will in the home and the factory, the mine and the mill, and flash your messages with lightning speed from sea to sea and from shore to shore." Thus, then, men come not only to fear Nature, but to reverence her in many of her moods.

Who among us can watch the birth of a new day as the morning splendour bursts through the gateways of the dawn, or witness the setting sun in its glory of purple and gold, without being stirred to his spirit's inner deeps! Who can stand amid the mighty Rockies thrusting their lonely peaks into the quiet sky, or watch the league-long roller thundering on the beach,

or look up into the star deeps of the Milky Way where system after system stretches back into those infinite reaches of space, without being swept through with emotions too deep for words! And shall we thus stand with uncovered head in Nature's temple and be unmindful of the Spirit that moves behind the veil? Shall we be smitten into tenderness at the sight of a landscape or a sunset glory and yet have no regard for that Presence

"Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things!"

Shall we reverence mere matter and stand unawed and unabashed by Mind? Shall we fear Nature and offer an affront to Nature's God? Then verily we are fools and blind to think that we can flout the moral order and yet not suffer loss when the whole of Nature's revelation goes to show that the only way of harmony is in conformity with law. How does this strange anom-

aly emerge that we who respect law in one realm despise it in another? We are fearful of offending Nature knowing how swift she is in exacting the penalty, yet we have no hesitation whatever in challenging the moral order by stepping across forbidden frontiers 'twixt right and wrong. We shun infected areas of communicable disease. Nothing would induce us to shake hands with a smallpox patient, and if the bubonic plague broke out in New York we should have a score of cogent reasons for a hurried and extended visit to Florida or Maine! We could easily justify every precautionary measure on the ground that it was an obligation we owed to ourselves, our families, and the community at large, to avoid all needless risk of contracting or spreading disease.

One of the main ministries of our modern-day science is that of minimizing risk in every social and industrial realm, and thus maximizing the area within which we can safely move. If you have not given this matter any study you would be surprised at the amount of time and brain power expended just in endeavouring to make

life safe. Think of the fool-proof contrivances employed in the world of mechanics lest the machinery which man erects should turn again and rend him. Look at the sanitary laws and ordinances and the thousand safeguards for the protection of workers on railways and trolley lines as well as in factories, ships, and mines. Everything that can be done is being done to hedge life round and keep it secure. Indeed, the extent to which this protective policy prevails in certain directions has provoked inquiry as to whether on ethical grounds it should not be curtailed. An inquiry as to how far the remedial agencies that are now at call for curing the consequence of misbehaviour are to be held responsible for the flouting of great physical and social laws would reveal startling results. When sins against the body can be rendered comparatively safe and the results of wrongdoing remedied by medical science, the old-time wholesome fear of transgressing is by so much reduced and thus the most powerful sanction of the law robbed of its might.

We cannot discuss this aspect of our subject

in this connection, but it is well worth the attention of thoughtful minds. The legalization and sanitation of the social evil existing in certain great centres of civilization no doubt had its origin in purely humane considerations for the well-being of the existing social order, as well as that of future generations. But thus to make sin safe by guaranteeing immunity from disease to people of irregular habits is surely to encourage the evil practice and play directly into the hands of vice. It is to give a free rein to passion and open up a sloping path to the hells of ungoverned desire. Of course, the point might be well taken that if the benefit of surgery and medicine is to be limited to those who through no fault of their own or their ancestors are the victims of accident or disease, then indeed the problem of surplus populations would speedily solve itself and this earth become the stage of a rapidly vanishing race. Whether such a limitation of the healing art would lead to any greater caution on the part of the public if it were generally understood that contributory negligence would cancel any claim to treatment may be questioned.

It is doubtful whether people deliberately take on risks simply because a doctor happens to be within easy call. I have never observed that the plentiful supply of lifebuoys on an Atlantic liner has ever served as an inducement to any sane person to throw himself overboard. Men think twice before hazarding life and limb, whatever remedial agencies may be at hand.

We return, then, to our main thesis that we who shrink from offending the laws of Nature have no hesitation about offering an affront to Nature's God. Some years ago leading ministers in Great Britain were questioned as to why the pulpit was losing its power. It was assumed that something must be missing from the message, else it would still be proving itself to be the power of God unto salvation as in the olden time. Proceeding upon this assumption R. J. Campbell affirmed that the note of "passion" was absent. Dr. Jowett declared that the missing note was the "wooing note." R. W. Dale of Birmingham declared that it was the note of sternness that was wanting or, as he called it, "the lost fear of God." We are living in days of

religious reaction and revolt. From the stern theology of our fathers we have swung to the extreme of exalting the goodness of God at the expense of His justice as though there were no such word as righteousness and no such thing as retribution following hot on the trail of wrong. The result of all this is already painfully manifest in the presumptuous impiety of our time. The fact is that God's justice and God's love are not antithetic. They are only different sides of the same thing, and God loves us too much to allow us to go on sinning with impunity. He will press everything into service—sorrow, bereavement, bodily suffering, mental anguish, anything, everything that the ingenuity of love can invent or devise—to turn our feet into the upward way. He is the Eternal Father and we are His children, and just as there can be no rest for us, neither can there be for Him till we are all gathered to His heart and His home.

THE PLACE AND PURPOSE OF PAIN

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

—II Cor. 4: 17–18.

I

I HAVE chosen this text in order to show with how fine an insight, how daring a courage, Paul discovers and declares the place and purpose of pain in the moral scheme of things. In his system of thought he places it in direct working relation to the evolution of character and the status of destiny. The great Apostle treats affliction as a necessary part of a process for perfecting the soul. He thus rescues the whole problem of human suffering from the realm of seeming random forces and puts it under law. Paul was too exact in his methods, too painstaking in the

collection and classification of his material, too relentless in his logic, too intellectually honest, wilfully or inadvertently, to shut his eyes to any group of facts, however disturbing to his philosophy of life or difficult to harmonize with his system of thought. He saw that suffering was a great fact that could not be disposed of by simply being ignored. As surely as one hemisphere of the globe is wrapped in gloom while the other is bathed in golden light, so at least one half of human life is saddened by loss or wrung with pain. Indeed it might be said that even the other is so skilled in veiling its sorrows that the very elect seldom dream of the heartache that the smiling face conceals.

No philosophy of life with any pretence to completeness could leave out a factor of such wide dimensions, and any induction formed from half truths and partial views must be both false in itself and mischievous in its working. An element so universal and recurrent cannot be regarded as accidental. Its existence and persistence point to purpose. If we postulate the moral government of the universe by a Being

infinite in wisdom, power, and love, then we are bound to find the ground of human suffering in moral sanction and the solution of it in moral ends. The problem, of course, is no new one. It is as old as humanity. It is finely dramatized in the Book of Job. It has been wrestled with by philosophers, poets, and moralists in every age and has plunged the most pious and thoughtful spirits of every country into intellectual despair. John Stuart Mill in his own blunt and honest way has stated the problem in the form of a dilemma: "If God be all-good, then He cannot be all-powerful, and if He be all-powerful, He cannot be all-good." Tennyson has woven the philosophical doubt of his day and the despair of its intellectual solution into the sweetest and most plaintive of verse. But his faith could see what was veiled from his reason, and he was able to sing:

> "I see in part
> That all, as in some piece of art,
> Is toil coöperant to an end."

Now, while broadly speaking, all human sorrow, if not a resultant from human wrongdo-

ing, has been sadly augmented thereby, it is patent that tens of thousands are made to share in suffering who have never shared in sin. "The whole creation," says Paul, "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Here is a solidarity of suffering for which the universal justice demands that there shall be somewhere and somehow and some day a corresponding compensation in a solidarity of joy. In taking up and fitting into His scheme the sorrows of life God is not to be regarded as merely utilizing an unexpected or accidental occurrence and turning it to moral ends. Affliction, according to Paul's view, is no mere contingency unforeseen and unprovided for, but which, having occurred as a by-product of evil, must be pressed into the service of good, and from being an effect of sin must in turn be made to subserve the cause of righteousness. This is true, but is it not an entirely gratuitous assumption of our theology that had there been no sin there had been no pain?

Viewed from a purely physiological standpoint the possibility of pain is inseparable from

the possibility of pleasure. Pain is defined as: *"The representation in consciousness of a change in a nerve centre produced by a certain mode of excitation."* Precisely the same nerve which when excited to a certain degree thrills with delight, will if made to vibrate beyond the pleasure point stab the consciousness with pain. Regarded then from a physical point of view these two possibilities must exist together or not at all. The destruction of either means the disappearance of both. Viewed from the moral standpoint their mutual coexistence as possibilities seems no less necessary. It may seem idle to speculate as to what would have happened had sin not entered the world. But it is difficult to see how character could ever be wrought into form or touched into beauty in a world never shadowed by sorrow or stricken by pain. What field would then be open for our training in sympathy, in tenderness, in patience, and in all the sweet and gracious charities of life? Even of the Captain of our salvation it is written: "He was made perfect through suffering." How then can we in whom good and evil so mysteriously blend

hope to win perfection of symmetry and strength excepting through the cleansing fires of pain?

In this great passage Paul shows the bearing of affliction on character here and on moral status hereafter. An important point to bear in mind is that he does not commit himself to the doctrine that pain necessarily means gain. This in the nature of things could never be. The very introduction of pain as a disciplinary measure carries the possibility of moral failure. This is an unavoidable risk. Any process adopted for the purpose of reducing the human will to tractableness must be so finely adjusted as not to become coercion, because to overbear the will, even temporarily, in order to bring the life across to the side of virtue would rob the changed position of any moral value. This would at once appear when the physical pressure was removed, for unless the will were acquiescent in the process the life would at once swing back inevitably to the old position of revolt. The enlistment of pain for the purpose of promoting soul culture thus carries grave moral risks. Instead of subduing it may harden. Instead of

ripening it may sour. Even when measured out by a love that is infinite in its patience and by an intelligence that is unerring in its administration, it may fail of its beneficent end. This is a great and solemn mystery, but it is inseparable from the charter of moral freedom under which we have been created and according to which we are ruled. We may harden our hearts and stiffen our necks in rebellion. We, who cannot add one cubit to our stature, may resist and resent the chastening of the Lord and say "no" to all the pleading eloquence of His infinite love.

Now, to have the problem of human suffering thus rescued from the haphazard region of mere accident or caprice, to have a place found for it in the realm of ordered events and under the rule of a personal God, is a tremendous gain to both mind and heart. It is the apparent fortuitousness and aimlessness of the world's misery, the seemingly blind and reckless dealing out of distress and disease without any intelligent or morally discriminating care, that man resents and resists. Something within him clamours for redress. Only let him be assured

that running through all the agony and desolation of the centuries there is the golden thread of a great and gracious purpose; only let the invalid know that his days of weakness and his nights of pain are not meaningless, but that they are working out results in character here and destiny hereafter that cannot be otherwise achieved; that though seemingly but random shots of fate, yet the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune are being divinely directed to their mark; then, though much may still be in shadow, he will be content to wait in patience until the day shall break and the shadows flee away. Only let the consciousness be wrought into heart and brain that pain and loss are never ends in themselves, but means to ends that lie beyond the dark horizons of time; that they are the appointed methods by which alone the soul can be wrought up into moral beauty and strength; then the whole round of weary waiting and apparently purposeless waste is redeemed from its desolation, and the winter of discontent is filled with the promise and the potency of oncoming spring.

But that all this compensating process does not work itself out automatically, that physical pain does not necessarily mean moral gain, is clear from the pivot word upon which the whole business is made to turn. Listen once more:

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; *while* we look not at the things which are seen; but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

This little adverb "while" introduces the subjective condition, the personal equation, which holds the key to the whole situation. It is the fundamental factor which, being supplied, transmutes the sorrows of life so that from being the mere effects of moral default or defective development, they become causative of results in character and destiny that will outshine the stars. Earthly loss, then, and heavenly gain are the two contrasts which this outworking process links up with a logic, the steps of which must have been all the more obvious to Paul's mind

that he did not think it necessary to state them out.

Now, by what mental process does this great Apostle arrive at his comforting conclusion? Let us gain, if we can, his point of view and thus look at this great question from his angle. This is the more necessary and important from the fact that he comes to us with all the claims of a specialist. No mere carpet knight or parlour philosopher is here airing his views on trouble and loss. The writer of this letter was not looking out upon the sorrows of the world from the security of slippered ease and armchair comfort. Nay, he speaks out of the dust and din of conflict. For the sake of Christ and the Gospel he has suffered the loss of all things that men hold dear. Listen to him as for once he allows himself to dwell upon his sufferings and to compare his lot with that of his fellow countrymen:

"In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in

journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

Now it is out of all this stress and strain, hated by the party he had left, and suspected by the party he had joined, that he emerges triumphant over pain, with the tumult of a great joy surging through his heart and the light of a deathless hope shining in his eyes. He had found in the "fell clutch of circumstance" a gymnastic for the soul. By reason of it he had been put to the task of constantly summoning fresh reserves of will to reinforce his drooping courage and strengthen himself in God. Through a thousand wearying and wasting experiences he had won his victorious way upward and prevailed, pressing the purple vintage of rapture from the grapes of pain. This it was that made him to become as tender as he was brave. It trained out all his higher powers and made him a just and gentle knight of God, a chivalrous,

high-souled, self-sacrificing minister of Jesus Christ. Through the discipline of life he was driven back upon his spiritual reserves, which were only awaiting the moment of need to pour their moral riches into his life. His forecast is based on his experience already reaped.

Bending thus beneath the weight of golden sheaves that he has already garnered so richly from the fields of pain this great graduate in the school of suffering comes to us with the assurance that our bodily afflictions are not capricious and mingled all without a plan, but that they are divinely ordered and assigned. That they do not strike with wanton aimlessness but are intelligently directed to the highest ends. The entire disciplinary process is seen by Paul as being conducted by a wisdom that never falters, by a patience that never breaks down, by a love that never fails. Behind it all as its administrative genius, through it all adjusting its pressure with the nicest discrimination, and in front of it all waiting to crown it with joy unspeakable and full of glory are the mind, the heart, the hand of God.

Now, as to whether the divine purpose, to which the discipline of life has thus been adjusted will be achieved in us, depends entirely on our mental attitude and moral mood. How we hold ourselves to the process will determine what we shall win out of it, and this in turn will depend on the relative values we place on things seen and unseen. If we are absorbed in the near and have no eye for the remote; if the present is everything and the future naught; if we believe that the grave is the end of all, that human goodness is nothing but a name, that immortality is a priest's fiction, a painter's fancy, or a poet's dream; if, in our view, this life is merely the play of molecules in certain chemical combinations which death will explode, to be built up again into other and equally evanescent forms; if we believe that personality is an illusion that will perish with the organism of which it is merely the product, and that brain and consciousness will together cease to be, then clearly our attitude to and our interpretation of sorrow will correspond with our view of life. Blot out

a future state of being with all its far-reaching compensations and we shall be hard beset to find an adequate motive for holding on to such an impoverished possession as life must then become, especially when pain like liquid fire is torturing the nerves and sorrow smites us broken-hearted to the dust. But the Apostle redeems the whole situation for us by setting an eternal and all-compensating future over against the vanishing present and an immortal harvest of bliss over against the seed time of sorrow and pain. His teaching shows that the whole of the temporal order has this for its purpose—to school us for the eternal. Much of our discontent and repining may be traced to our forgetting or failing to appreciate the truth that all the disciplinary processes of life have an educational value for both mind and heart. We forget that we are entered as pupils in a great graduating course and that the curriculum includes sorrow as well as joy, loss as well as gain, death as well as life. Browning has worked this out for us in "Rabbi Ben Ezra" under the metaphor of the

potter and the clay and shown that it is only as we so hold ourselves to the incidence of life's pains that we can win out of them life's gains.

"He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed."

II

Of course, underlying all Paul's philosophy, as we have seen, and constituting its logical basis was his firm conviction that over against this life and answering to it as seed time unto harvest there is a life beyond the grave. The doctrine of the resurrection is not merely implied, it is distinctly affirmed in the context: "We believe and therefore speak, knowing that he who raised up Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus and will present us with you." This is the great corner stone on which he rests his argument, and indeed unless there be a future life where every tilt in the balance shall be adjusted,

then this life with all its high hopes and intimations of immortality becomes the most torturing system of treachery and betrayal that the mind can conceive. Nor is it merely a level scale beam to which he looks forward, but a far-outweighing compensation—an eternal weight of glory set over against what becomes in retrospect and by comparison a mere and momentary feather-weight of woe.

This question, then, for Paul was closed to all debate. The spiritual order was so real to his mind, so intimately nigh, that he would fain have others gain his point of view. He would have us set the things of time in the light of eternity and estimate all values in terms of another currency than that expressed in dollars and cents. It is this fundamental requirement which being supplied will turn the lead of sorrow into the gold of unspeakable joy. This transference of emphasis from the visible to the invisible, this shifting of the centre of gravity from this world to that, once it takes place in the realm of our thinking must revolutionize our whole philosophy of life. Just as the substitution of the

heliocentric theory of Copernicus for the geocentric theory of Ptolemy led to an entire reconstruction of the scientific conception of the solar system, so the adoption of Paul's philosophy as against that of the earthbound life overcomes the pull of terrestrial attraction, binds us to a celestial centre, and bends us to vaster orbits than those of earth and time.

This teaching gets life into focus, and it is this question of focus, although Paul does not use the word, which seems to be in his mind. His suggestion as to looking not at the things that are seen, but at those which are not seen, implies this. It is one of Paul's paradoxes. The attention is at once arrested and the question leaps to the lips, "How can we look at the unseen?" Let Paul explain and illustrate. In his letter to the Romans, speaking about God he says: "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." The sense of this dictum is that the nature of the worker is deducible from the nature of the work. The qualities of mind and heart that stand expressed in the visible

creation index and forthtell the character of its invisible Creator. All the gay pageant of Nature, the glory of sunset and dawn, the changing seasons, the splendour of the grass, the glory of the flower, the nightly brilliance of the stars, the rounded mirror of the sapphire sea, and the flowing curves of the purple hills, are merely a few of the manifold modes under which the Invisible Personality manifests His beauty and goodness, His wisdom and power. But these are all abstract and invisible qualities. We can detect them only as they are expressed in visible terms, or, to put it another way, we can look at the things unseen and eternal only through the medium of things seen and temporal.

This, then, is the true function of the visible to pass us through to the invisible. If we decline to be thus conducted, preferring to remain in the outer court rather than to penetrate the veil; if we consent to remain resting when our would-be guide would have us push on and through into the holy place to which she points, then that is not her fault but our own. That men mistake the temporal for the abiding is no more the fault

of the temporal than it was the fault of John the Baptist that men mistook him for the Christ. He always disavowed messiahship. "He confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. But there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me." Now, the visible order of creation is a sort of John the Baptist for the invisible; the transient is the forerunner of the permanent. Its business is to prepare the way of the permanent into the mind and heart of man. To the Apostle Paul, as to all who have trained the senses of the soul, the witness of material things is clear and strong, and this is what they say: "That from which we have come and into which we haste is the fixed, the static, the enduring. We appear and vanish that mistrusting us you may throw yourselves upon that which abides. We would break down your faith in the temporal that you may build it up on the Eternal, who is and who was and who is to come." But because we have not been loyal to the principle of development on the higher side of our nature our spiritual sensibilities are dull,

so that we catch no voice or vision from behind the veil.

We all know what the microscope has done in the way of aiding physical vision so that otherwise invisible organisms are clearly brought into view. But in the use of that instrument focus becomes such an important condition of successful observation and research that through imperfect adjustment the finest microscope in the world may become an obscuring instead of a revealing medium. And even when all requirements have been fulfilled in this regard, and that which was hitherto veiled comes into sight, the unskilled eye will often fail to detect details which to the trained microscopist stand clearly revealed. But that these micro-organisms are visible at all is because they have taken on form. It is through structure alone, simple though that structure may be, that the observer can recognize the presence of life. The only way by which this vital but invisible force can demonstrate its presence to our senses is through visible forms. This is its method of approach and self-revelation to our consciousness. Thus, if you seek a

demonstration of the unseen order you carry it about with you in your own flesh and blood. Your own bodies are the outward and visible proofs of this inward and mysterious energy. They are the finely wrought texture which life has woven. Behind this veil of flesh the shuttles flash, but no man hath seen nor can see the hand that throws them to and fro. We are all witnesses to these inscrutable forces which until they take on form or build up structure in man and beast, in tree and flower, have no way of manifesting their presence or displaying their power, at least in terms that we can apprehend. As we are at present conditioned, even the power of thought has to work through so material a medium as the brain, while for its transmission it has to find some form of expression, some word or act, some glance or sign or symbol, before it can pass from mind to mind. I cannot at the moment think of any force whose presence and properties can be demonstrated without the means of some physical medium. Suppose, for example, that someone questioned the presence and power of gravity, how would you prove it?

You could only demonstrate its presence by releasing some visible object from your hand and letting it slip to the floor. Or again, if someone denied the potency of magnetism you could only make it evident by bringing some visible magnetic affinity within the field that was being swept by its attractive power.

Thus then the invisible is forever playing itself out in the field of our observation. It demonstrates its presence and power by its action on visible agents. It is the creative spirit forever at work and of which the beauties of earth and sea and sky are but the flowing, many-coloured, ever-changing robe. It is saying to us as it flashes and fades, "Look at my output, behold my handiwork, consider how I conduct all physical, chemical, and vital processes, controlling their actions and reactions, their combinations, permutations, disintegrations. He that sees me at work sees God at work. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and divinity—

so that they who do not recognize Him beneath the show of things are without excuse." Now, to all who are distressed and perplexed by the sorrow and suffering of this present life, with all its inequalities and misfits, its baffled hopes and shattered plans, let me offer the great comforting and compensating assurance of the text. It affords a fine corrective to our partial and premature judgments on life's apparent contradictions by bidding us suspend our verdict till all the facts are in. There is another life awaiting our advent to which this is but the prelude and preparation. In quite another and grander sense than George Canning claimed in regard to the revolted Spanish Colonies in South America, the Apostle Paul in this passage calls into evidence a new world that he may redress the balance of the old.

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Listen to Aubrey de Vere:

"Count each affliction, whether light or grave,
God's messenger sent down to thee; do thou
With courtesy receive him; rise and bow;
And ere his shadow pass thy threshold, crave
Permission first his heavenly feet to lave;
Then lay before him all thou hast; allow
No cloud of passion to usurp thy brow,
Or mar thy hospitality; no wave
Of mortal tumult to obliterate
The soul's marmoreal calmness; Grief should be,
Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate;
Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free;
Strong to consume small troubles; to commend
Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to the end."

TO CONQUER WE MUST REPLACE

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places seeking rest; and, finding none, he saith I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

—Matt., 12:43–45. (Read also Matt., 12:22–30.)

THIS parable must be regarded as springing out of the miracle which preceded it, the physical condition of the possessed man suggesting to Christ corresponding moral disabilities consequent on giving place to the spirit of evil in our lives. There are many speculations more curious, perhaps, than profitable to which such a parable must give rise. But I propose to waive all these and endeavour to bring out and apply what seems to be the deep and central purpose that the Saviour had in mind. He is seeking to show the utter futility of a purely negative morality and

the certain relapse of a life into evil ways that is not fed and operated by a great and positive purpose. Christ here likens a man's life to a house built to be tenanted by the good Spirit of God, but capable of being usurped and occupied by the spirit of evil either through the willingness or unwatchfulness of the owner.

The parable represents the case of a man who has had a bad spirit for a tenant, whom he has succeeded in evicting from the house of his heart. In other words, the man wakes up some day to the fact that some besetting sin to which he has been giving house room is playing havoc with his life, and he resolves that he and it shall part. He summons all his power of resolve and shows it the door, and is somewhat surprised, it may be, at the readiness with which it consents to depart. He expected a struggle on the threshold, but the evil thing goes out with almost an audible chuckle, for it knows that this is not the way of permanent expulsion, and that the more readily it appears to go the more easily and the sooner it may return.

Thus, though the man sits down content within

his closed door, Christ teaches that unless he gets a new and better tenant his empty house will not only bring the old habit back, but half a dozen others in its train. Now, this is just another of those profound and arresting truths that Christ was forever unveiling, thereby proving far more conclusively than by any direct claim to Divinity that He stood at the very heart of things, holding the keys of all mystery, whether of life or death, or the vast beyond in His Almighty hand. Let us narrow ourselves down to the study of this profoundly practical piece of psychology, because it is more than possible that precisely this very kind of thing is going on in some of your lives. Under the spell of the truth that you have heard or read, and that has been divinely applied to your hearts and consciences, you have resolved to cast out the demon of intemperance or gambling, of dishonesty or impurity, which has been defiling and degrading your lives.

But while the resolve has been a noble one it has been purely negative, and life cannot be sustained on mere negations. I would not say a single word to discourage you in any practice of

self-restraint. But I would remind you that the highest law of life is, after all, not repression but expression; and the attempt to take refuge in mere negations and live a life of mere restraint must break itself to pieces against this supreme and positive requirement. Your moral life cannot be nourished or sustained on abstinence any more than your physical life. If your medical man were to prove to you that your present dietary scheme was feeding a fatal disease, it would, of course, be your wisdom to abstain from foods which, however pleasant or otherwise desirable, were perilous to life. But, to proceed on the negative principle of total abstinence from all food would prove just as fatal as the line of indulgence, and with none of its satisfactions. The negative withholding from the bad must be supplemented by positive appropriation of the good.

This is so obvious a proposition when thus expressed in physical terms that one is almost disposed to sniff at it as a platitude. And yet in the moral world there is no principle more consistently ignored. Merely to give up drink, give

up gambling, or give up any of the multiplied forms of evil is at once the most difficult method of moral treatment and the least satisfactory in its results. The fact is that drink, gambling, uncleanness, or whatever the accidental form a man's vice may assume, is not the real trouble. These are only outward and visible symptoms of a deep-seated and inward disease that affects the whole nature. You might as well try to cure a case of smallpox by a series of amputations. The trouble is in the blood and must be constitutionally treated. To draw off all the patient's impure blood, even, would only give him his quietus just as surely, and certainly more swiftly, than to leave him alone. No, the impure blood must be eliminated and replaced by that which is pure.

And so with the moral nature of man. It is useless to deal with mere symptoms. Of course, there may be sociological advantages in keeping men in restraint from the practice of certain sins. But the ethical value of such a solution to the individual himself is nil. He is simply held back from the outward act. His feet are in the

narrow way, but his desires are forever hurrying down the broad road that leads to destruction. And judgment will be passed, not only on what we are and do, but on what we would be and do if we could.

No salvation is sufficient that does not insert new and positive principles of life and conduct. Life must evolve, and it can only evolve what is involved. You don't get rid of evil by putting it in irons. Whether in ourselves or others, it can be overcome only by good.

Look at it this way. Here is a section of splendid soil, but it is covered with virgin scrub —forest trees of great height and girth, between these smaller trees, between these again a tangle of hazel and undergrowth, the abode of reptiles and vermin. But let us suppose that it is selected by men of lion heart and iron hand. In they go with axe and saw and fire till they have dispossessed it of its useless and noxious growths. And now, having made a clean sweep of every vestige of vegetation, let us suppose that instead of planting it out with wholesome fruit or grain or grass, they leave it absolutely unsown. What

will happen? Why, any practical man will tell you that old growths will return with renewed strength, and not only so, but with undreamed of combinations.

Seeds that have lain dormant for many years, the deposits of previous generations of growth, stir into activity under the action of fire and moisture, so that literally the last state of that land becomes worse than the first. Don't you see that the mighty potentialities of that soil under the influence of sun and shower must express themselves, and if you do not find them good seed they will unfold the bad? It is impossible to keep land clear by a merely negative process. To conquer you must replace. The bad must not only be cast out, it must be substituted by the good. And so it is with our human nature.

Its measureless energies of mind and soul and body must find expression. This is the Divine intention. Think you that we have been so splendidly endowed simply to be held in leash? The highest form of force is exhibited not in repression but in direction. Imagine all the magnificent powers of the human body and brain simply

buckled back from evil and allow no scope in good. You say, "Oh! yes; but at any rate man would then be safe." Yes, but that would be safety at too big a price. Better set man free even though he should break something and cause himself and the Almighty unspeakable pain.

The writer once tried to light a safety match by rubbing it on the prepared surface of the box. The head rubbed off, and so with the next, and the next; till after twenty similar failures he had to abandon the hope of a light. They were "safety" matches all right; indeed, so almighty safe that they were useless! Of course, if a man is out for exercise this class of thing may be very useful; but when he wants a light he will prefer the more dangerous variety of lucifer, though it may light at unexpected times and places, rather than a "safety" that will not light at all. But besides, we have been sent into this world to play the part not merely of passivities, but of activities, and in a sphere that calls for and can utilize every ounce of our force.

Life is not fulfilled by processes of amputation and subtraction. The New Testament ideal

of character is positive, not negative. It is a life not merely minus evil, but plus righteousness. And it is the necessity for this plus quantity upon which Christ is here insisting. It alone can redeem life and render it a positive power for good. Men and women who simply do no harm, if such creatures there be, have not yet been born into the new Kingdom. They may have ceased to do evil, but they have not learned to do good. But to stop short of the second is to nullify the first. It will vitiate the whole process. Not to take the second step is to retrace the first. It is this truth that Christ has thrown into dramatic form in this parable, and the one clear, strong, unblurred impression it creates is that there is no safety in mere reform.

The mere negative condition of being dispossessed of evil is no guarantee of virtue, no safeguard against vice. Man requires salvation, which is a positive force working destructively against evil and constructively toward good. See how loyal the Apostle Paul is to this teaching. "Whatsoever things are pure, true, honourable, &c., think on these things." "Put off the old

man"; that's negative, but he does not stop there —"Put on the new man" is the positive injunction. Again, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit." And yet once more, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." The fact is an ethical code of "DON'TS" that simply ties a man back from evil falls infinitely short of the Divine requirement or the human needs of the case.

But to return to Christ's figure, every man must have a tenant. There is no choice about this. The moral nature will have no vacuum. But we may choose the quality of our tenant. How carefully you would do this in the matter of a merely material house. Suppose one of you who is a landlord had a tenant who was stripping your house of its fittings and breaking up its floors and doors and fences for firewood; how long would you tolerate it? And yet how many are letting the house of their lives to unclean tenants who are diseasing the body, dethroning the intellect, and ruining the soul!

Let us be warned against the delusion that there is any way out for us, any permanent dis-

possession of evil except through being divinely possessed of good. It is by the introduction of a new life principle alone that evil can be conquered and expelled. But this is Christ's work. Let us bring our sin-stained lives to Him, and flinging open the door of our will for His entrance, let us admit Him to permanent residence in our hearts. He will fill and flood and fertilize our inner life with His own pure Presence till our outer life becomes fragrant and fruitful as the Garden of the Lord.

THE GOD OF BREAKING HEARTS

He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

-Psalm 147: 3–4.

I HAVE chosen these words not merely on account of their magnificent sweep, but because of the unfathomable comfort they contain. What sort of a mind was this that at one and the same moment could take in such wide extremes as the broken in heart and the majestic movements of the heavenly hosts! What possible relation can there be between the aching human breast torn with grief, haunted with misgiving and distracted with doubt, its hopes a handful of withered petals whose lingering fragrance serves only to sharpen the poignancy of its regrets, and the stately march of those stellar hosts that neither haste nor rest and through all their glittering ranks have never felt a thrill of pleas-

ure or a pang of pain! What greater contrast can be conceived than on the one hand these vast magnitudes of matter that have neither sense nor feeling and on the other the grief-stricken

> "Hearts that are broken with losses
> And weary with dragging the crosses
> Too heavy for mortals to bear"?

Who among us would ever dream of bracketing breaking hearts with starry worlds? True, we might not go to the extreme of treating them as antithetic, in the sense that God's care for the one must necessarily mean His neglect of the other, because we have been nourished in the belief that the same Hand that rules the worlds above us and curves the planets to their orbits tends the lilies of the field and feeds the young ravens when they cry; that the same eye that kindles as the seraphim chant His praises sees the sparrow flutter helplessly to the ground. But it is one thing to believe this and quite another thing to feel it when hope lies low with wounded wing and sorrow beats us broken-hearted to the dust.

In these supreme moments when we are caught "in the fell clutch of circumstance," when the earthly props on which we have leaned begin to fail us, when the light goes out of the life, when the soul sits alone in the darkness and the ghosts of the past flit by—

"When all the phantom, nature, stands—,
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of our own—,
A hollow form with empty hands"—

the temptation is strong to doubt whether there be a God at all, or if there be, whether He is not seated somewhere above His stars, calm-browed, imperturbable, remote, infinitely withdrawn from all the passion and the pain of earth and time and taking no interest, or only an impersonal one, in the tides of human misery that heave and moan about His feet. We argue in our blind unbelief that He cannot be expected in a universe so vast, and embracing such an infinity of interests, to have a private and particular care of private and particular souls. And when we have said this we think we have said something that in some way enhances the great-

ness and grandeur of the Divine character. But it is no mark of a great mind to scorn detail, and we only require to examine under the microscope the tiniest midge that sports away an ephemeral existence in the beams of a summer's noon to discover that God is as lavish of His beauty in design and His wisdom in adaptation in an insect that lives but a day, as He is in the case of creatures called to be the heirs of everlasting life.

We so readily fall under the tyranny of numbers, are so easily mastered by magnitude and mass, that we require to be delivered from the spell of their enchantment. At first sight it may seem difficult to hold at one and the same moment the cosmic and the individualistic view, but on second thoughts it will be seen that the logic that links them is adamantine. Whether we think in terms of stars or atoms, of material suns or immaterial souls, makes no difference here. Magnitudes do not count. A child's marble will demonstrate the law of gravity as truly as a moon and moreover is much more easy to handle. It is the loyalty of that law to the individual

atom that guarantees its loyalty to the general mass. Let it fail in the former, and we have no assurance that it will hold in the latter.

We have no difficulty in accepting this truth in the world of matter. Newton's generalization from the falling apple still holds the field. According to Einstein, even rays of light which are now proved to have mass, are subject to this law, so that star-beams passing by the sun on their way to the earth are deflected by gravity from their track. Everything, then, is caught in the grip of this all-embracing law, and nothing is too great or small for its concern. So it is with the love that streams from the great heart of God. Every creature great and small is held in its embrace. The difficulty for most people is to believe that the Infinite Personality, who fills and floods all nature with His presence, can condescend to set up and sustain private and personal relations with the individual souls which He has made. That He might be expected to know and concern Himself about the great ones of the earth, may be imaginable, but that He should particularly note or personally recog-

nize the rank and file of humanity, it were a piece of presumption to expect.

This, you remember, was David's first reaction to the study of the star-strewn sky. As his imagination winged its way from constellation to constellation, from station to station, from star to star, it became so overpowered with the sense of magnitude both in distance and in mass that human values shrank and shrivelled to a span. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" He beheld the generations of men coming and going like forest leaves and when compared with the changeless stars that held on their timeless courses, everything human seemed so futile, so petty, so inconsequential, so destitute of all significance as to be unworthy even of a temporary place in the Almighty's mind. Now, if that were the impression produced upon the thoughtful mind in contemplating the then known heavens, how it must be accentuated today when the telescope has opened up such vast abysses of space and peopled them with so many myriads of worlds. If David was both impressed and oppressed by the disparity which he observed

between the relative constancy of the starry hosts and the brief and brittle tenure of the hosts of men, then what must be the feeling of the modern observer as he sweeps the heavens with his telescope and resolves the hazy radiance of the Milky Way into beds of gleaming suns—beholding a thousand worlds where David saw but one! Nothing could seem more natural or more appropriate than this overwhelming sense of human insignificance in the presence of such magnitudes as paralyze the power of thought. And yet if the teaching of Isaiah 40 is to be trusted, nothing could be more unreasonable or farther from fact. Let us turn for a moment from the human reading of the stars and listen to the Divine deduction from the same set of facts.

The Hebrew nation is in exile away on the vast Babylonian plains, for all the world like your own far-stretching areas in the South, with climatic conditions much the same, for the site of the ancient city of Babylon in the East corresponds in latitude with that of Charleston, South Carolina, here in the West. There, after one of those warm and cloudless days that we know so

well, we must suppose the prophet to have been standing in the cool and quiet night and under the brilliant Chaldean skies where the science of astronomy was born. It was then that the word of the Lord came to him as it had come to Abraham, a thousand years before, and it bade him behold the splendid pageant of the starry skies.

God will teach Isaiah, and through him the people of His choice, that their exile, instead of being an evidence of His abandonment, is the most convincing demonstration of His sleepless vigil and fatherly care. They have a dreadful sense of desolation and forsakenness. They are steeped in misery. Waters of a full and bitter cup are being wrung out to them. That they have brought it all upon themselves, that by their sins they have wrought their own national undoing, gives only an added bitterness to the draught. They had put God out of their thoughts, and now that they are being ground beneath the heel of the oppressor they bethink themselves of the former times when in their loyalty they were free but in their freedom became false. Groaning

beneath the yoke they regard themselves as being finally cut off and forever doomed to wander uncared for and unblest in the misery which their iniquities have made.

Whether the prophet himself shared these dismal forebodings cannot of course be deduced with any certainty from the narrative, but presumably he himself required to be reinforced in order that he might be the minister of good cheer to others and fulfil the injunction with which this fortieth chapter of Isaiah opens. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." In order to do this he is bidden to look upward and behold the gleaming hosts that muster in millions on the field of night. He is told to note that for all they are so numerous there is never a falter in their march nor a failure to arrive through all their shining ranks. The track of each is determined, the orbit of each ordained:

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way

is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."

Man's reasoning is that because of God's care of the material universe He will be too exhausted or too preoccupied to care for man. God's reasoning is that if He cares so much for mere matter, what will He not do for mind? Because no farthest-off world in the lonely depths of space lies beyond God's ken and care, so no human life, however lowly or lonely, can slip from His hand and wander away into the wilderness, forgotten and unblest. This is the reasoning —if God so pilots these soulless worlds of matter, these golden fleets, that nightly cleave the upper deep, shall He not much more pilot you, "O ye of little faith"? Shall suns and systems that blaze for a season have the personal care and superintendence of God, and human life, which is the birth of His own breath, be left to accident or caprice? Even of the stars it is said:

"He calleth them all by name." But ye are of more value than many stars! They are but the garnishing of His choice and many-chambered palace. But you are the children of His heart and His home. They shall perish but you will remain. Yea, they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shall they be folded up and changed. But you will endure through all the years of the Most High.

Now, it is this faith in the Divine Fatherhood that is to save the world from despair, and to foster this faith God has sent His dear and only Son, that in His life and death He might gather up and express to us the truth that someone cares, and not only cares but shares our human sorrows and shame; that at the centre of things there is a mind that thinks and plans for us and a heart that feels and loves. This is the faith that alone can sustain us when our plans miscarry and our hopes lie dead. To believe in the infinite goodness that dwells at the very heart of things, this it is that redeems life from despondency and death from despair. As you look up at the stars, then, and look down at the broken

in heart, remember it is the same God that cares for them both and is working at both ends of the scale. At one end He is working with cold, dead, impassive matter; at the other, with warm, affectionate, responsive mind and will. Hence the one method is fixed and arbitrary; stars flash and fade, moons wax and wane, suns rise and set, systems and constellations wheel round in their perpetual orbits. They have no power to disobey. Bound by the fiat of God they hold on their predetermined way. God's method with them is hard and fast. But His method with man is one of persuasion. Instead of command we have beseeching entreaty, tender appeal, and the whole divine ministry of long-suffering patience and all-hopeful love—

"But O what gentle means
What condescending ways,
Doth our Redeemer use
To teach His heavenly grace;
My soul, with joy and wonder see
What forms of love he bears for thee!"

Within the circle of this love our lives are being lived. It overarches and underspreads every

child of man. He who cares for the stars that come and go in the pauses of His breath is doing and will do the best that He can for us. This is the faith which alone can give poise to the spirit and keep the mind in perfect peace. When the storms of life beat wildly and the waves run high, only let us have the assurance that in spite of all appearances there is a golden purpose, divine, progressive, and above all things friendly, running through all the scattered and apparently conflicting incidents in individual and national life, knitting them all into a splendid unity and carrying them forward to some far-off and all-compensating goal—then we shall be content to wait in patience for the dénouement of life's perplexing drama in the light beyond the veil. In the beautiful words of Schiller:

"A God is. A Holy Will lives,
However the human heart may stagger.
High over all the weavings of time and change
Lives the sublime Purpose,
And though all creatures groan in a circle of change,
Yet unchanging in the midst of change
There is one quiet Spirit."

But a greater than Schiller speaks to you to-day.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

THE OBLIGATIONS OF PRIVILEGE

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honour?
—Malachi 1 : 6.

THE Almighty Father is here represented through His prophet as expostulating with His children on the ground that while keen in claiming their filial privileges they were shamefully tardy in discharging their filial obligations. They made great parade of pious ceremonial but with nothing in the way of reality behind it to back it up and give it meaning or worth. Indeed, the very ceremony of sacrifice itself had degenerated into an insulting presentation of inferior offerings such as they would not have dared to proffer to an earthly king. "Present it now to your governor and see what he will think of it" is the scornful challenge of Jehovah to these defaulters and defilers of His house. The burden

of the prophet's message is the futility of prayer when the heart is insincere.

In the light of the text let us consider on what footing petitioners can imagine themselves to be for asking favours of one whose authority they flout and whose claims they ignore. It is, of course, all very well to acknowledge God when we are threatened by calamity or overtaken by disaster. Even the most atheistic have been known to pay Him the empty compliment of recognition and supplication when they have run short of supplies. And if the Almighty Father were content simply to be reckoned among a people's reserves, with the distinct understanding that He was not to be drawn upon excepting in an emergency, these periodical scare prayers might be acceptable. But "The First Lord of the Cupboard" is hardly the relation in which He desires to be regarded by His children. Whether we accept the Old Testament representation of Him under the symbol of Sovereignty or the New Testament manifestation in terms of Fatherhood, the truth stands clearly expressed that He desires a more inti-

mate and affectionate response on the part of man than that which the mere exigencies of life can evoke and sustain. In the passage before us He is represented as protesting through the mouth of His prophet against the people's profanation of sacred things, the neglect of divine worship, the insincerity of the priests, and the consequent reduction of the temple service to a hollow form as offensive to God as it was useless to man.

The tendency in every age is for religion to degenerate into formalism. The very modes of its expression become the means of its repression, till worship comes to consist of mere words, vacant of meaning and void of force. Once our religious ordinances cease to throb with life and glow with feeling, they become as distasteful to God as they are irksome to us. Moreover no one is deceived by such pretence, unless indeed it be ourselves, and even we have but to reflect for a moment in order to see the utter futility of thus playing a part with High Heaven for an audience and the Church for a stage. The carefully elaborated insincerity of the hypocrite

is infinitely more insufferable to God than the most blatant blasphemy of those who make no profession of religion at all. Who would not prefer the blow of an open enemy to the hand-shake of a treacherous friend? Judas kissing the Master whose betrayal he had already prearranged is all of a piece with the lip service to which the life is giving the lie. God is represented in this chapter as expressing a preference for a closed temple and a neglected altar rather than for a crowd of formal worshippers whose religious profession is an affectation and whose piety is a pose.

Better a thousand times that the altar should remain cold, raked out, and forsaken than that it should flame with unhallowed fire. To seek the Divine favour by religious exercises in which the heart has no place becomes in the world of religion what the uttering of base coin is in the world of commerce. It is an attempt to get something valuable in exchange for something worthless. What kind of a God He must have been in the imagination of such worshippers to be thus duped by His votaries it is rather difficult to

conceive. But even assuming that such deception could succeed, have we ever thought of the reflex moral disorder and disintegration that successful deceit must work on personal character and through personal character on the corporate life of the community?

The soul's sense of security springs from an inherent belief that the universe is rooted and grounded in Truth. Nature never breaks troth. When we know what she has done once under a certain set of conditions, we know what she will do always if those conditions are observed. She never disappoints expectations that have been accurately founded on previous observation. All our physical science is built up on this fundamental fact, and the science of the moral order is similarly based. Hence, said the Apostle, "We can do nothing against the truth." In any contest with it the lie has not a hope. It cannot last. It is the one intolerable thing for which no abiding place can be found. There is no rest for the sole of its foot. Nothing will give it shelter. It must keep moving on and on till it moves out.

The business lie may successfully run its

curved and covered course for years, but sooner or later it must come to the surface and show itself to be the scum that it is. The political lie may capture the crowd and succeed in exploiting public confidence and cash for private and party ends, but the world grows sick of adventurers and learns, albeit but slowly, that every social injustice and oppression with which the body politic is afflicted is but the fruit of which falsehood is the root. The social lie may deck itself out in purple and fine linen; it may disport itself in sumptuous clothes and cars; it may enthrone itself like Herod and be worshipped as a god, but even while its devotees are proclaiming its divinity and filling the air with the incense of their adulation it is being eaten of worms. The religious lie may masquerade in white raiment and pass for saintliness, deceiving even the very elect, but time, the great revealer, will strip the deformity of its fair disguise and make bare the corruption that it sought to conceal. Wide though the universe may be there is no ultimate hiding place for the hypocrite. The pitiless hail will sweep away the refuge of lies.

Indeed, simulation will at length become so intolerable that if no one else should seek to unmask the pretender he will hasten to unmask himself, so authoritative will be the demand of truth for absolute homage, so irresistible will be her claim to universal regard. In the Saviour's challenge, "Why call ye me Master and Lord and do not the things which I say?" there is a clear implication that in the absence of fidelity protestations of loyalty are an offence, only throwing up perfidy into bolder relief.

There are only two courses open for us as honourable men: either to make our conduct coincide with our creed, or to quit reciting our creed. This ought to be so obvious and compelling as not to require stating, but strange to say it is these very obvious things that do require stating, for although generally accepted they tend to become inoperative and, as Coleridge says, "lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul." For us to call God "Father," and Christ "Lord," while we offer the rags of our time, the dregs of our powers, and the merest small change of our wealth, is to provoke the contempt

of men and the derision of the gods. The things we believe in most are the things into which we put the bulk of our money and time. We have but to ask as a people where the major part of our spending goes and the problem of our moral whereabouts is instantly solved. Whether we are dealing in universals or particulars this principle will be found to hold. Every man among us can ascertain his moral direction by applying this test. "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." This is Christ's own formula and becomes the revealing medium whereby our ruling love is laid bare.

Now will anyone pretend that what is commonly called the "main chance" is not the chief quest of the community? Every power is on stretch for the bread that perishes, while the starved and neglected soul like a captive eagle beats its pinions hopelessly against its prison bars and pines for the vision and voice of God, that word by which alone it lives. Of course we have our periods of pious reaction, days when we change our gears and hitch up with the stars. During Lent in particular we become furiously

religious, and a visitor from another planet would marvel at the dexterity with which we temporarily change over from a centripetal to a centrifugal movement. But if he stayed long enough he would discover that while we run our business on the continuous current system our religion is wired up with a mere storage-battery supply, with all the exigencies of exhaustion and short circuits that the system involves. Such religion is a mere emergency measure, a sort of distress signal functioning only in a contingency, instead of being geared in with all the multiplied activities of daily life.

If this intermittent piety with its spasms of religious fervour carried with it any sense of self-depreciation or contrition, if it could be accepted as a pledge of a more even and continuous devotion to the things that matter most, it might of course be differently construed. When our so-called worship is in no sense an expression of love and reverence for God as our Father, but simply an attempt to get at His pocket; when men do not want Christianity itself, but merely its products; when they are all there for its

fruits without wanting its roots; when they assume the cloak of piety and pose in prayers that mock the Power they profess to adore, the indignation of God is kindled to a glowing flame. With weakness He can sympathize, with failure He can be patient, with opposition even He can be tolerant, but insincerity He cannot and will not endure. He will consume it with the breath of His mouth. He will blast it with the brightness of His coming. Let us, then, so examine ourselves as we approach His table that we do not eat and drink unworthily, and if, under His blessed Spirit's searching light, it be revealed to us that we have regarded iniquity in our hearts, let us draw near and make confession of our fault, and according to His promise He will forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

PERVERTED PRIVILEGE

Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

—Isaiah 5: 1–7.

IN THIS old-time parable we have translated into picturesque and popular terms the story of a Divine experiment which failed. It was an ex-

periment conducted on a large scale and through centuries of time. The Jewish nation had been selected and preferred by Jehovah as the subject of special spiritual culture, not, let it be distinctly understood, for its own sake merely, nor even primarily, but that from it as from a seed plot might be outplanted in due time, and as the soil became ready for them, the great truths and principles that would redeem the wilderness of the world and make its desert places rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Instead, however, of any such propagation of light and knowledge being effected by the Jews, they themselves well-nigh lost all the advantages that their separation had secured, and for the very reason that they failed to pass it on. Whether in the case of individuals or nations the law works inevitably that what you don't use you lose. Even had they been loyal to the missionary obligations which their superior moral status imposed, it would still have been difficult to fix in any permanent form the spiritual qualities which this system of intense culture had educed; but disloyalty made impossible any con-

solidation or capitalization of their moral assets.

In this parable the two main factors of heredity and environment upon which so much expectation is based by all workers for social reform are shown to be present in their full working power and yet with the most disappointing results. The chosen people are here symbolized under the figure of a vine—no wild and ungovernable growth of the woods, but the very finest variety in vines, the last word—the choicest product in the way of viticulture. It was a vine with a pedigree. It had a history of care and culture behind it. Generations of carefully tended stocks had gone to its production, so that in its selection everything in the way of the most favourable heredity had been secured.

In addition, and that everything conducive to the fulfilment of the husbandman's hope might be insured, it is represented as being planted in a very fruitful hill from which every stone had been removed. Moreover, it was carefully fenced in, and while thus guarded from the trespass of intruding beasts from without, it enjoyed within all the advantages of careful pruning and

constant turning over of the soil. Thus all the conditions of a favouring environment were rendered sure.

In spite, however, of a noble ancestry and the most happy and helpful surroundings in the way of soil and sun and shower, at the time of vintage it shattered all the hopes of its planter by reverting to a primitive and worthless type. All its culture ends up in clusters of sour and bitter fruit, proving the persisting and prevailing power of a barbarian ancestry which no amount of training could do more than temporarily suspend or suppress. At a single step it covers the whole way back to the native wildness from which it had taken generations to evolve.

Now the application of this parable to the Jewish nation was as remarkable for its fitness as for its fidelity to biological fact. Truly they had been most carefully selected. In the person of Abraham, the Hebrew vine had been lifted out of its wild and primitive environment. To this chosen representative God had revealed His redeeming purpose for the Jewish nation, and through them for the world. That this purpose

might be fulfilled He segregated Abraham and his descendants, with the idea of making them a spiritual culture through which ultimately to save the world. Everything that could be done was done to secure their moral and spiritual development and to preserve them from contamination through contact with the coarse and vulgarizing cults of that ancient time.

Instead, however, of all this working out to the end desired and producing missionary results, it created a spirit of arrogance on the part of the favoured race, cleaving between it and all other nations a separating gulf, which rendered anything in the way of extending the worship of Jehovah not only difficult to the Jew but distasteful to the Gentile. But a religion or a morality that is not aggressive is in retreat. Life, to retain its vigour and hold its own, must react on its environment and make it subserve its ends, otherwise the environment will react on it to its disintegration and decay. The moral purity that is merely passive undergoes deterioration. To remain permanently pure it must be actively purifying. It must touch such im-

pure personalities as are contiguous, into its own fairness, or else be touched by them into their foulness. Between these two there can be no truce. Neither can be content while the other holds the field. The moral tide that is not flowing is ebbing. Spiritual forces not in advance are in retreat. They cannot dig themselves in and become stationary.

No finer illustration of this principle of instability could be found than that employed by the Prophet. Everyone with any knowledge of fruit and flowers knows that in the culture of plants by process of careful selection, grafting, and the crossing of types by artificial fertilization, no matter how far you may conduct the flower or the fruit away from its primitive wildness, the greatest watchfulness is necessary after the best results have been achieved in order to prevent reversion to their original and rudimentary type, so strong is the tendency to throw back.

There appears to be no point in the ascent of life where effort may be relaxed without resulting in retrogression. The upward culture is a

perpetual struggle against the down-dragging forces, which seek to regain their lost ascendancy and recover possession and control of that which is being developed away from their dominion. Of course, no plant or animal could keep up this struggle unaided. Man must assist it by careful tending and selection, weeding out the weak and backsliding members of the group and breeding only from the most advanced. But even with all this watchfulness and reinforcement the original nature often proves too strong for the artificial culture and selection. The line of progress suddenly doubles back on its tracks to some intermediate stage, or even loops to its starting point.

Now that moral and religious development is no exception to this rule the parable of our study was employed to show. Morality must become a militant if it would not become a diminishing force. It is just here, I suspect, that we shall have to look for the secret of Israel's decrepitude and decay. She kept up no active moral warfare against the evil practices of her neighbours, with the result that they infected her. Had she laid

herself out with missionary zeal to make the knowledge of God a universal possession, had she sought with anything like moral earnestness to come into saving contact with surrounding nations, and proved by a finer code of conduct the superiority of her creed, the reflex result on her own character would have been elevating and consolidating.

Apart from any objective conquests and conversions to Judaism that might have been effected, the subjective reaction in keeping her loyal to her own ideals would have been abundantly worth while. As it was she became so feebly compromising that she attempted a combination service of Jehovah, Ashtaroth, and Baal. This, of course, was the line of least resistance. With this loosening of her creed there came inevitably a relaxing of her conduct. She substituted form for spirit, semblance for reality—employing the very ordinances of her holy religion as a subterfuge under cover of which she practised the very abominations against which that religion had been divinely instituted as a protest.

The corruption of the best becomes the worst; consequently an idolatrous Israel became more offensive to Jehovah than the Canaanitish races whose false gods were being worshipped on every high mountain and under every green tree. Israel's defection speedily displayed itself in corresponding dissoluteness of national life, and thus it came to pass, as the Prophet shows, that disloyalty to God emerged in inhumanity to man. This is the indictment of the chapter: God looked for judgment—that is, equitable transactions between employer and employed—but He found oppression. He looked for righteousness—that is a fair deal between man and man, the harmony of fulfilled relations—instead of which the cry of dishonesty and discord reached His ear.

Now the judgment of God is here made to turn, as always in this book, not on creed but on conduct. Israel could doubtless have passed with honours in any examination on the theory of religion. They could have recited without fault or flaw the "shalts" and "shalt nots" of the moral law, but in the realm of practice they

utterly came down. The two outstanding evils as here set forth are, first, a fierce and overmastering greed of power, coupled with its tyrannical abuse, and justified on the principle that right is measured by might and that whatever is physically possible thereby becomes morally permissible.

In the second place there was the throwing off of all restraint in the realm of appetite, turning life into an orgy of gluttony and drunkenness till, with beclouded brain, confused conscience, and enfeebled will, it ended up in repudiation of all responsibility toward God and man. Now, the first of these evils is represented by the Prophet as taking the particular form of an inordinate desire for what we would call in these days real estate. There was monopoly by the wealthy few of the land which belonged to the struggling many. This was a direct contravention of the land laws under which Canaan had passed into their possession and which forbade any permanent sale of one's patrimony. The freehold of agricultural land could not be sold outright, for at the fiftieth year every piece

sold reverted to the original owner or his heirs. But these small farmers were being sold up and their properties coming into the possession of large proprietors who were thus squeezing the peasantry off the land into the already overcrowded towns. This was bringing about a centralization of the population hurtful to city and country alike.

The law of the Jubilee Year with all its gracious provisions was thus being violated by these powerful landowners with whom no one seemed courageous enough to deal, for the judges were not above bribery, and justice was corrupted at its fount. Thus the unfortunate poor who expected the restoration of the lands at the appointed time for resumption found themselves permanently ousted from their holdings by the powerful and unscrupulous rich.

Now, whatever may be said about the land question in relation to the well-being of the community in these days, in those olden times it was linked up inseparably with the moral and social interests of the nation; and the Mosaic law which provided that the land should auto-

matically revert to its original owners at the end of fifty years was directly framed to prevent overcentralization and encourage the tilling of the soil. How far the fact that more than one half of this state is massed in New York City has to do not only with the complication but even with the very creation of many of our social problems we might do well to consider.

It hardly lies with the pulpit, however, to formulate a land policy by which this condition of things can be corrected and encouragement be given to settle on the land. But what does concern the pulpit is the enunciation and enforcement of such principles embodied in broad-minded, generous-hearted and public-spirited citizens as would work against the avarice that enriches the few at the expense of the many, that benefits a class at the cost of the nation, or advances the nation to the detriment of mankind.

From the second great count in this indictment it is clear that drunkenness is no merely modern evil. From immemorial time it has woven about the bodies and souls of men its bale-

ful spell, robbing the brain of its clearness, the heart of its tenderness, and the hand of its skill. These early morning tipplers referred to by the Prophet were evidently a familiar sight in the Jerusalem streets. We know the type. Trembling from the previous night's debauch, with blood-shot eyes and a feverish thirst they were early abroad for a morning nip to steady their jangling nerves. Then as now the drink habit worked against all justice and truth, all affection and fine feeling, and destroyed the fairest handiwork of God. And yet though prophet and priest, economist and moralist, jurist and physiologist have in every age marked this thing down as the greatest enemy of the race, though we all agree that it is by far the most fruitful source of bodily disease, mental derangement, domestic discord, and social misery, we go on fooling with our legislative futilities while all the time this outlawed traffic is filling from year to year our lunatic asylums, our hospitals, and our jails, and is annually sweeping ten thousand more into dishonoured and premature graves.

As a nation sins so it suffers. By the abuse of

freedom we are heading our Western civilization toward disaster and doom. Listen to the warning threat of our text:

"I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be eaten up and break down the wall thereof and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste. It shall be neither pruned nor digged. But there shall come up briers and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it."

By a bold figure the Prophet represents hell as being embarrassed by such an unexpected influx of guests that it can find no place for them until it has increased its accommodation:

"Therefore Hell has enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure, and their glory and their multitude and their pomp and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it. And the mean man shall be brought low and the mighty man shall be humbled. But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness."

And now let us bring all this home to ourselves. Let it be asked what more could God have done for the United States than He has done in

the way of a good inheritance and a favourable environment. You have a noble puritan ancestry that honoured God, loved His word, reverenced His day, and obeyed His commands. They embodied their faith in literature, in laws, in life, in liberty, in great and free institutions, and in seats of education and learning which are the envy of the world—these have all been passed on to you at tremendous cost of treasure and blood. In addition to all this capitalized moral force in the way of inheritance your lot has been cast in one of the fairest and most beautiful lands of earth.

No Canaan ever trodden by the Hebrew could compare for fertility with the territory that you hold. While as for size, New York State alone could hold no fewer than eight Palestines within its bounds and then have more than one thousand square miles to spare. Roughly, if you take a line from New York to Cape May, west to Dover, north to Somerville, New Jersey, and thence back to New York you have the dimensions of the Holy Land. As to fruitfulness, with the exception of the Plain of Esdraelon there is

nothing in Palestine to compare with this Canaan of the West.

Here, then, in this land of plenty and beauty which this generation never did a hand's turn to gain, we are living a sheltered and luxurious life. We are the outplanting, and I as an Australian put myself into the same category—we are, I say, the outplanting of the best Anglo-Saxon stock, in a country with an unrivalled climate and under the freest constitutions, and what have we to show for it all in the way of national character? What kind of a return are we making for all that has been expended in our favour? You have only to open your morning paper to get a reply. Of course, we are not so simple as to believe everything that appears in print, and even when we do believe what are inescapable facts we have too much sense, I trust, to generalize hastily from particular instances.

But when all this has been said and allowed for, there is enough left to trouble the heart and perplex the brain of every lover of his land. The newspapers of other countries are holding us up as preëminent in crime, and as though this

were not a low enough depth to have reached, one journal, which I shall not name, plunges us still lower by asserting that our papers here are dwelling almost with pride upon our evil reputation. Mr. C. Saunders, Manager of the Illinois Bankers' Association, reports for the year 1924–1925 crime in the way of highway robbery and bank hold-ups, to the extent of seven hundred and sixty million dollars. Crimes, according to his report, have increased during the last thirty-five years 1200 per cent.

The prosperity of the country, instead of begetting a generous disposition to reach out in the spirit of a fine international comity with other lands, is making us a self-centred and self-sufficient community, narrow in mind and shallow of heart, contracted in vision, forgetful of God, and suspicious of man. It is breeding in us class distinctions, race prejudice, arrogance, extravagance, ostentation, wastefulness, and vulgar display. These are the cancerous growths that are clutching at the vitals of this Republic and threatening its doom.

But the worst feature of the case is not the

bribery and corruption, the craft and graft that have infected every social grade, but that we are content to sit down to it. The most appalling fact is that this sort of thing has come somehow to be regarded as inevitable, and if not an inseparable concomitant of democracy, at any rate one that has so dug itself in that it cannot be dislodged without great disturbance of the social structure.

When a corporate body thus dopes itself into a false security, when it shelters and shields from surgery a parasitic growth that is draining its life, there can, of course, be but one end, in which both host and guest must share. This is the warning that America requires to hear and heed today, and if she will not receive it in loving monitions from the kindly lips of her ethical teachers, she will get it thundered from the iron lips of an enemy fleet bellowing judgment, bellowing doom.

There is any amount of moral salt in this community to save it from decay if it were only released and applied. This is the great home missionary task to which this nation is called, and

as Christians we should at least play our part in determining for America that her pathway shall be upward and her progress sure.

The only power that can achieve this is the Gospel of the Grace of God. With that Gospel we have been placed in trust. Here is the dynamic that can turn the tides of our country's thought and endeavour and make them set toward God and Righteousness. Let us believe it in our hearts, incorporate it in our conduct, let it ramify through all the relationships of our many-sided lives, and we shall make our contribution to an end which will be but the beginning for this great American Republic, and through it for the world, of a newer and diviner age.

THE HOPE THAT CLEANSES

I. Purified by Hope

And every man that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.
—I John 3:3 (R. V.).

We have here disclosed the elevating, purifying power of a high ideal which at the same time is immeasurably more than an ideal. An ideal may and often does beckon only to baffle, constrain merely to confound, challenge only to check, invite our advance only to recede on our approach. But here is an ideal which not only gleams before us but at the same time glows within us. It is at once the prophecy of our moral future and the pledge of its fulfilment. It incites the expectation here that it is waiting to crown hereafter with the fulness of realized bliss. It is an energy mysteriously folded up and delivered to us with the divine gift of spiritual life.

Thus to set a great hope gleaming before us and at the same time working within us is to

render assurance of its realization doubly sure. Before dealing with the moral effect of this great hope let us look at the ground of it as revealed in the preceding verses. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Here is disclosed the law of likeness through inheritance. This is the great ancestral force which draws us unerringly and irresistibly to resemble our kin or our kind. Science calls it the law of conformity to type, in accordance with which offspring tend to resemble their parents more closely than anything else. "This," says Professor Huxley, "is the first great law of reproduction." Now, it is on this law doubtless observed by the Apostle John, though not stated in so many words, that he bases his spiritual science. On the ultimate fact that God is Father, he rests his expectation of God-like children.

Whatever else the new birth meant, and it is to John we owe the recorded teaching of Christ on this great science of spiritual biology, it at least carried this: it placed the soul under the

power of a new and endless life with all the inherited possibilities of that life stirring and striving to find adequate expression. "It doth not yet appear," says John, for it is under the law of spiritual evolution—it is controlled by the conditions of orderly and progressive development, but when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for with eternal life, there must be eternal development and ever-growing similarity to God. But this great biological law of inheritance, potent though it be, is not the only force at work, conforming the human to the likeness of the Divine. It is augmented by the law of moral assimilation working through filial affection under the inspiration of a pure and purifying hope. This hope has been made a congenital accompaniment of the new heredity with which it works as an auxiliary force, so that between them the downward tendencies of the old heredity are not only arrested but reversed and the soul set speeding on the upward way.

That this augmenting force of hope is an essential part of the new birthright is clear from the word of Peter, "Blessed be the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." But hope lives on the future. Faith may ask only for a past or a present, but hope is faith plus expectancy; it is faith on tiptoe of joyful anticipation. It is not concerned excepting as a point of departure with what is or has been but with that which is to come; it is kept alive by to-morrow; it feeds and flourishes on the unseen, for hope that is seen (that is realized), says Paul, is not hope. Confine it to the here and the now, and it must straightway droop and die.

It is important that this should be clearly seen and firmly held in this particular connection because it breaks down all barriers to human progress in the way of character attainment and meets the demand of life for the free and unfettered unfolding of its powers. But this process of unfolding presupposes an antecedent infolding. It implies an inlaid pattern, wrought into the soul in the way of character possibility and depending on the concurrence and coöperation

of its possessor with the forces of spiritual development, in order to become actual and evolve into view.

Now, in order that this concurrence and coöperation may be rendered morally certain and thus secure to the new-born soul the possibility of fullest self-realization and expression it has been dowered with this dynamic of hope. The phrase, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be," by thus veiling the issues excites curiosity and appeals to the imagination, which wings its way beyond the horizons of earth and time and strives to feature out the future possibilities of the sons of God.

The "when" of this great happening of course will depend upon the extent to which we yield ourselves up to the process of assimilation to the divine. It will turn on the "set" of our mind, the fixity of our will, the tenacity of our purpose, the whole-souled enthusiasm of our acquiescence in and coöperation with the working forces that are making for our full redemption and final manifestation as the sons and daughters of God. This it is which brings

into view the particular phase of the question which our text presents and which discloses the working power of the ideal. He "that hath this hope set on him (that is, on God) purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

It is the practical effect in the way of character transformation which this great expectation brings about on which the Apostle would fix our thought. "He that is thus divinely stirred," says John, "purifies himself." God, as we have seen, is both the begetter and the fulfiller of this hope. It is really the stream rising to the level of its source in the heart of the Eternal and effecting its cleansing purpose on the way. It is "set" on God and as such draws the whole life after it as any all-absorbing purpose must. It purifies by concentration and consequent elimination.

Any great and overmastering purpose coming into the life must automatically cut out every interest that cannot be made to subserve its ends. Under its domination we simply have no use for anything that will not feed the main stream and help forward the leading line. You

see this illustrated every day in business, in art, in music, in science and literature, in law and medicine and statecraft. Let a man select some definite object of pursuit, let him set it before him as his hope and determination and his whole course of life will shape itself accordingly. Everything he plans will be controlled by this aim, adjusted and directed to this end. To employ the words of the text—it has a "set" imparted to it.

If you have ever watched the building of a great chimney stack in a large manufacturing centre you will have observed that as week by week it mounted higher and higher it narrowed as it rose. The reason being that every brick in that structure had a "set" given to it which if continued upward would have tapered the circumference of that stack off to the finest point. But what I want you to note is that every course of bricks by its "set" makes its contribution to the grace and symmetry of the ascending structure because it is controlled by the constructive purpose of the builder.

So it is with this great hope. It is the con-

structive principle on which life moves up to its apex through being "set" on God. It is the supremacy of this great controlling principle that unifies life and delivers it from the peril of the double mind. It is this conception of purity which, I judge, was in John's mind, the idea of simplicity in its Latin sense, of freedom from any admixture, and which when once attained allows everything that cannot be made to subserve its purpose to drop out as a negligible quantity, a thing that does not count. Only let the hope or desire be strong enough, and it will do the cutting out. You need not stay to discuss as to whether any suggested course of action is right or wrong. The question will be, will it help or hinder the realization of my ideal? Will it add to or subtract from my efficiency? Everything that does not feed and reinforce the main current must go!

Thus it will come to pass that if the hope be but strong enough, it will cleanse the life of every diverting or dividing interest. It is simply wonderful what such a hope will do when it enters and takes possession, especially when as

in this case it centres in a Person who commands the heart's best love. In such a case hope is simply Love's expectation of fulfilled desire.

Only let a man's love for Jesus Christ become supreme and everything becomes possible in the way of character and service. Here is a love so pure and purifying that in its hallowed flame all loves that are base are burned out, while such as are true and lawful are purged of their earthliness and rendered immortal with a beauty no age can wrinkle and no power destroy. Just as the morning stars pale their brilliance and deepen their distance in the pathway of the dawn, so all the lesser lights in our firmament grow dim before the inrush of that splendid dawn; all the lesser loves retire when the Bridegroom of our souls appears.

II. Saved by Hope

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. —Romans 8: 24, 25.

In our last study we were speaking of Hope as a dynamic working in the hearts of God's

children and inciting them toward the Ideal Purity. We saw that the Ideal thus set gleaming before us, as well as working within us, was no mere cold abstraction but a Person, close and warm and tender, loving and longing to be loved, One whose voice was bidding us come and whose hands were outstretched to draw us near. Now, all the teaching of the Apostles in regard to the new life rests on the conception of salvation as a gradual process and not as a finished work until probation ceases and eternity begins. It is a something that runs on concurrently with life, and the end is not yet.

The new life principle which is begotten in the soul that surrenders itself to Christ is thus full of promise and potency. Possibilities in the way of character have been wrought in under the distinct assumption of their being wrought out into loveliness of perfect deeds. But this means time, and time calls for patience, because in the nature of things this is a process that cannot be hurried. Neither can it be standardized, for no two of us are alike; while as for some of us we are never two days the same. The call,

then, is for patience, because there is the greatest danger of our getting discouraged at the vexing slowness and lowness of our attainment both in the matter of personal character and of social service. If I can make you rise from reading with a braver heart and a more hopeful spirit in regard to either or both of these ends, it will be quite worth while. There is no beatitude pronounced upon the self-satisfied. Better fall back a thousand times breasting the heights than tread the dead levels of indifferent acquiescence or move down the slopes of ungoverned desire.

"That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit!
This high man aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find Him."

Now, let me say that I have learned, perhaps more deeply and painfully than most of you, how desperately difficult is the ascent in spiritual life and with how many backslips and sideslips the upward way can be marked and marred. That upward way is no go-as-you-please tournament, but a perpetual challenge to one's forces of heart and brain. It is an adventure with thrilling experiences, arresting incidents, startling surprises, signal victories and crushing defeats, high hopes and soul-tormenting fears. It has its days of daring and its nights of doubt; moments of rich and rare discovery; hours of insight and outlook,

> "When all we meet is fair and good,
> And all is good that time can bring,
> And all the secret of the spring
> Moves in the chambers of the blood."

Then follow stretches of arid and God-forsaken country with not a single living thing in sight to break the drear monotony of the burnt and barren waste. Little wonder that the timid and half-hearted should fall out of the ranks

and hark back to an easier mode and march of life or that even the boldest should at times lose heart and pause to question whether the struggle is after all worth while. For all the expenditure of thought and care on spiritual culture, and for all the toil of heart and knees and hands, there is so little to show.

Even when we do seem to have won to some point of vantage and are feeling somewhat secure, the ground suddenly slips from beneath us, and we can find no footing that will hold beneath our tread. Of course we would fain believe with Clough that "'Tis better to have fought and lost than never to have fought at all"—but we should like to feel and know that some headway has been made. Even to the choicest souls there often comes the wistful wonder as to why the Christian graces are so long in coming to anything like assured maturity of flower and fruit. Our development in all those qualities that constitute what we are accustomed to summarize under the head of Christian character is so provokingly slow. We struggle for years

against our manifold besetments till we think we have at last attained to some degree of mastery only to find ourselves suddenly flushed with anger or lifted with pride, consumed with envy or kindled into resentment, or caught up in a veritable whirlwind of passion and swept if not into some illicit act yet into a very brainstorm of impure desire.

In these tempestuous moments all the seemingly capitalized moral force that we prided ourselves on having stored up against the evil day is plucked from our grasp, and bankrupt of purity and peace we have to start right back at the beginning and build up all over again from the foundation of repentance and faith. So, at least, it has appeared, but upon reflection I am not quite so sure. When we are worsted by our enemy and tricked by him into surrender, it may very well be that all has not been lost but that something has been saved from the wreck and passed into the structure of our character that will prove of priceless and permanent worth. The self-knowledge to which our failures con-

duct us; the self-distrust which they create; the smashing blows they deal to our pride, conceit, and self-sufficiency; the utter self-abandonment they induce and by which we are thrown back on God in despair of any self-recovery are all so much to the good.

These very consequences of our moral defeats under the blessed ministry of the Spirit may be turned to our account and made contributory to growth in grace and efficiency in service in ways and to ends which, without such a discipline of disaster, perhaps, could never have been attained. If we postulate as a First Great Cause, a Being of Infinite Wisdom, Power, and Love, then we must believe that His creative purpose was the ultimate and universal good of His creatures. If, therefore, in the pursuance of this purpose He finds it necessary to expose the entire system to all the agony and desolation through which the suffering ages are being made to pass, then He is bound for His own justification to make certain that out of all this pain and loss there shall issue some unspeakably glorious and far outweighing gain.

But then this gain must be individual. The universal compensation of the mass can mean nothing if it does not mean the compensation of the units that go to make the mass. In the last resort and to have full vindication the gain must be personal, individual, specific, because the pain and loss have been personal, individual, and specific. Hence it follows that whatever blessedness is made to accrue from the great redemptive work of Christ to the victims of the fall must be made available to them as private and personal souls. But if in the final consummation the whole creation is thus to be made the gainer through having gone the way of wrong, there can be nothing inherently incompatible in the idea that the individual soul here and now and during the painful progress of its pilgrimage should win good out of evil, gain out of loss, and profit out of pain. After all, what are our sins but forbidden adventures into prohibited areas? By some evil sorcery the forbidden thing by its very prohibition kindles desire. That which is fenced off has always a strange fascination. We have all felt the lure of the unlawful. Even to

the unimaginative cow the grass always seems greener in the next paddock. But whereas in our case there are no fences but only lines across which we can step, transgression is so easy and comes with such a challenge to our freedom, such an appeal to our curiosity, such an invitation to the spirit of enterprise, that in spite of the threatened penalty we accept the risk.

The conviction has been deeply inwrought with the very warp and woof of our nature that we were made for happiness. It is an instinct as true as it is divine. The only mistake we make is in the direction we take to find its correlate. Our sins are simply experiments to discover the highest good along paths that are disallowed. Trial and failure would appear to be the only method by which the soul can be tutored and trained into knowing and doing the will of God. Every experience, however painfully gained in the course of this tutelage, is of value. Every fresh accession in the way of conviction as to the folly and futility of traversing the Master-Will is so much to the good when we take it to heart. If we would but accept as final the failure

to find along forbidden paths the object of our quest, we should soon by the very process of exhaustion discover the true and only way of blessedness. In common life we do.

Let us suppose ourselves set down in front of a safe with a combination lock. There is handed to us a list of a thousand words, one of which we are assured, if spelled out on the dial, will enable us to slip the bolts. We have tried out, let us suppose, nine hundred words without success. Our interest will now centre solely on the remaining hundred. With the nine hundred proved futilities we are not concerned. They were tried and found to fail, and nothing would induce us to try them again. They are finally dismissed. Or look at it this way. In physics or in chemistry, when once we have found after exhaustive experiments, in which we have excluded every possible error or vitiating factor, that a certain result will not come out, that closes the question. We do not go on conducting experiments that we foreknow will prove failures.

But when we step from the realm of physics into that of morals we keep on trying to do what

we have proved a thousand times to be impossible. Under the spell of some strange sorcery we blithely take a road that again and again, after promising satisfaction, has disappointed us and tricked us into the marsh and mire of remorseful memories. If we only sat down and thought for a moment we could forecast the woeful end and see ourselves like Merlin of the Idylls disillusioned and hear in advance the wily Vivien make the forest echo to the hateful name of "Fool!" But while all this is true and some of you who read these words may have failed so often that you feel disposed to give up the struggle as of no avail, I come to you with this glorious gospel of an everlasting Hope. I am sent to tell you that though you may have slipped and fallen ten thousand times there is still hope, for you have to do with the "God of Hope." The day of your full and final redemption draws near. Till it comes possess your souls in patience.

Character is a growth, and a slow one at that. We have no meter that can measure up its force, no scales that can weigh its quantity, no chemi-

cal or vital test wherewith to estimate its quality. Its elements are invisible, intangible, imponderable. They defy detention and analysis. They cannot be classified under Mendelyeev's periodic law, and yet they will survive all the shocks of time and change. Death cannot hurt them, and they laugh to scorn the wasting of the years.

Surely to bring such a growth to perfection is worth a little patience on our part, seeing that God Himself has consented to wait so long. Indeed, it would seem as if to Him nothing else were worth waiting for. This is the end to which He is making the whole creative process move. For this suns rise and set, stars flash and fade, moons wax and wane, tides ebb and flow, the seasons come and go. For this all the forces that stream out from His infinite heart forever beat with their rhythmic rise and fall; for this Christ died and rose; for this He lives and reigns; for this His Blessed Spirit enfolds the world in close and tender embrace; for this ten thousand times ten thousand ministering angels are leagued in

holy service for the sons and daughters of men. Because it is not the will of the Great Father that one even of the least of His little ones shall perish, but that all might come to the knowledge of His love.

REFLEX JUDGMENT

The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; and a man is tried by his praise.

—Proverbs 27 : 21.

THIS book of Proverbs is the crystallized wisdom of the ages, and in our text we have revealed a criterion of judgment endorsed by every country of earth and by every century of time. The idea in the writer's mind seems to be that just as the furnace fires burn away the dross from the gold or silver ore and reveal the pure retorted metal, so a man's supreme affection consumes, as of no consequence, everything that is merely transient and accidental to his being and lays bare his essential soul, disclosing his real value to the eyes of men.

Thus we have but to ask ourselves what above all things we admire and desire, and we have at once a flame test, so to speak, under which our innermost self will start into view. It is a canon by which we may measure ourselves or be meas-

ured, and by which our true place may be discovered in the scale of mental and moral worth. The persons and things we admire most become our sure and incorruptible judges, from whose decisions there can be no appeal. Our appraisal of a picture, a poem, or a personality, becomes by a swift and reflex process a revelation of our own mental calibre and moral status.

It is a great thing to find such a ready-reckoner to our hand, such a working formula so easy of application for solving the problem as to what manner of persons we are. "Man, know thyself" was one of the sayings attributed to Solon. It was supposed to have fallen from heaven. It was inscribed over the entrance to Apollo's Delphic Temple, and the duty of self-exploration was held in as high regard in the school of Socrates as it was in that of Christ.

Here, then, is a key to self-knowledge. It is hanging on the peg of our admiration. We have but to ask what we esteem most highly, and the secret lies open to our gaze. The answer will tell us our fortune, because by a logic as swift as it is inevitable a man's life follows his love, and out

of our love are the issues of life. The trouble with most of us is not so much the lack of self-knowledge as of self-direction. It is the devilish tendency to drift—the fatal disposition to allow the logic of circumstance to determine for us what we have not the courage or the energy to determine for ourselves. Instead of our seizing the moment and bending it to our will we allow the moment to seize and bend us to its will. We are at the mercy of our moods, and instead of strongly commanding we feebly obey. It too often happens that we who can stand up in our own native right and *make* what comes, just sit down tamely and *take* what comes. We surrender our birthright. We abdicate in favour of our very vassals. We allow our original endowment in the way of creative and controlling power to go by default and become the silly fools of fashion or the puppets of circumstance instead of its masters and lords. Of course, all the time that this inverted order is proceeding we are cursing ourselves for our folly. We are conscious of the widening gulf we are cleaving between what we ought to be and what we are, be-

cause the ideal still graciously gleams before us with beckoning hand. We confess our faith in it. We express our admiration for it, even in the very course of resisting the pull of its attractive power.

Thus it comes to pass that we stand condemned at its bar. We are tried and found wanting by the very things we admire. We have given them the right to condemn us as unworthy because, though offering them the homage of our lips, we refuse them the loyalty of our lives. It is their verdict of "guilty" pronounced from without, coupled with its endorsement by conscience from within, which in so many of us is dividing life against itself and making a discord in the soul. In the natural order of things that which elicits our admiration should court, if not compel, our emulation. Otherwise we are at quarrel with the best we know, so that what should prove an inspiration to us serves only as a rebuke.

Even when we are wholly in accord with our ideals and our wills are keyed up to their pur-

suance we find them beckoning only to baffle. As we advance they forever recede. This is really their value. They give us no rest. They break up our nest. They destroy our self-complacency—that fatal foe to all lofty and sustained endeavour. "A man's reach should exceed his grasp," says Browning, "or what's a heaven for?" Dr. Keyser, the distinguished professor of mathematics at Columbia University, in a recent book has pointed out that there are two kinds of ideals—those that can be realized and those that cannot. The former he declares are spurious, the latter alone genuine, and he shows that in spite of the alleged discouragements that high ideals may breed they alone have made possible the triumphs of the human spirit. Among these triumphs he includes such widely diverse things as the "miracles of modern mathematics," "the Republic of Plato," and "the art of the Greek masters." Indeed, there is nothing great or good in the way of achievement that is not the outcome of the struggle to realize the unrealizable.

So then we strike in our text a universal principle which holds alike in all realms. The fact is that as the circle of our achievement widens its ring in relation to any matter, whether intellectual or moral, whether in pure or in applied science, we are made conscious of our ignorance and inefficiency at more numerous points, and the vast unknown, unrealized, unattained, seems vaster than before. Look at it for a moment in the matter of taste. Now "taste" has been defined as "the power of discerning and appreciating beauty, order, congruity, proportion, symmetry or whatever constitutes excellence." But this power of discernment, this taste faculty, of course varies not only with different individuals but with the same individual at different times. Like every other faculty it is subject to the law of development. A man's susceptibilities in regard to the true, the beautiful, and the good may be heightened or lowered incalculably by education and association, and here, let me say in passing, lies the paramount importance of familiarizing our young people from the earliest dawn of perception with all

that is best in music and literature and art as well as in morals. "We needs must love the highest when we see it," cries the broken-hearted Guinevere in the *Idylls of the King.*

In spite of a theology that taught the total depravity of our human nature, we believe that there is an indestructible affinity for God and goodness subtly and inextricably wrought into the texture of our souls. Were it not so, the revealed standards of truth and purity would leave us cold, finding nothing within us to which they could make successful appeal. The prodigal in the far country, amid all his rags and ruin, still had visions of home and memories of the old fireside, with all the sweet and tender pieties of those bygone days. And it was these imperishable memories of the past that fed the purpose of the present and set the promise of the future surging in his heart. This recovered vision of the ideal home, with all its clean and wholesome associations, became at once the prophecy and pledge of the prodigal's return to the welcome and plenty of his father's house. Had the old ideals been totally dead, then indeed had the day

of hope closed for him in a night of dreadful doom.

There is, then, a secret homage paid even by the depraved to the ideal purity, and though temporarily it may be crushed down and overborne, giving no sign and uttering no voice, though it may be driven in and back upon itself and made to herd with swine, yet give it but the slightest opening and it will leap to the occasion, a quick and quickening force. As long as we can get this moral reaction to the ideal when it is presented there is hope. And I have never yet found a man so low or a woman so abandoned as to reveal no responsive chord. Archbishop Alexander tells the story of the chaplain of a penitentiary who records that among the most degraded of its inmates was one miserable creature. The matron met her with firmness but with a good will which no hardness could break down, no insolence overcome. One evening after prayers the chaplain observed this poor outcast stealthily kissing the shadow of the matron thrown by her candle upon the wall. He saw that the diseased nature was beginning to be

capable of assimilating new life, that the victory of wholesome personal influence had begun. He found reason for concluding that his judgment was well founded.

If, in the keyboard of your church organ, every note but one were out of tune, that single note by remaining true could serve as a starting point from which the whole harmony might be restored. And so if among the shattered ruins of a man's character and career there be but one chord that vibrates in unison with the ideal—one aspiration upreaching from the hell of disappointment and disillusion—the whole of the lost harmony may yet be recaptured and the discordant life tuned in with the mind and heart of God.

A man, then, is proved and approved or maybe reproved by the things that he judges to be worthy of praise. His assessments reveal, and unless corrected tend to confirm, his standards of excellence. We say "unless corrected" because standards may be elevated or depressed. It is simply wonderful how with a little educa-

tion a person's taste may be refined in the matter of music, literature and art. Until the eye has undergone a certain course of training in form and colour, even the greatest masterpieces in painting cannot awaken that appreciation of their power and that reaction to their beauty which are their due. But the more they are studied the farther they are seen to remove themselves from the commonplace and to dwell apart. By and by we get to measure the awful distance that separates them from mere mediocrity. That distance was always there, but our untrained vision failed to appreciate it, or if we were vaguely conscious of some transcendent quality which wove its spell about us we could only marvel at it and merely wonder why.

Then again those who are in a position to judge with regard to the popular taste as to music, for example, assure me that ever since the finest compositions of the great masters have been put on the air there has resulted a wonderful reaction against anything less than the best. Thousands who once demanded and delighted in jazz are now intolerant and decline to

listen in until the higher class productions are set free. Now, what happens in this direction may take place in all, especially when there are men and women of culture prepared to lend a helping hand in the elevation of the public taste. But it is in matters of the spirit that it becomes of supreme importance that we should praise that which is worthiest and best. The qualities and principles which we enthrone, the ideals to which we pay homage in the monuments and memorials we erect, become a declaration to all the world of the things we believe and live by and that we long for our children to believe and live by too. The danger is lest they come to serve merely as moral watermarks to indicate from what height the ethical sentiment and conviction of the community have declined.

In either case the truth of the text is confirmed, for whether we abide the test or fail we are tried out and by our praise are justified or condemned. It is this recoiling and incoming judgment of ourselves which the outgoing judgment provokes that becomes the criterion of our moral classification. The trouble with us

all is the appalling interval which we permit to exist between the things we praise and the things we practise. We all consent that certain ideals in art, in literature, in life and conduct, are admirable. When they are concreted in personalities we honour them in columns of marble or bronze. We weave garlands for their decoration. We set apart days for their celebration. We chant pæans in their praise, and then forsooth, because we have made these demonstrations in their honour, we imagine that we have amply fulfilled all righteousness and can straightway sink back to the level of our selfish and commonplace lives. Sometimes our pent-up virtue finds expression in less attractive form, and readers will remember Macaulay's strictures on our spasmodic protests against vice:

"We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. In general, elopements, divorces, and family quarrels, pass with little notice. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it. But once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must

make a stand against vice. We must teach libertines that the English people appreciate the importance of domestic ties. Accordingly some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offences have been treated with lenity, is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. If he has children, they are to be taken from him. If he has a profession, he is to be driven from it. He is cut by the higher orders and hissed by the lower. He is, in truth, a sort of whipping-boy, by whose vicarious agonies all the other transgressors of the same class are, it is supposed, sufficiently chastised. We reflect very complacently on our own severity, and compare with great pride the high standard of morals established in England with the Parisian laxity. At length our anger is satiated. Our victim is ruined and heartbroken. And our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more."

This is the kind of thing that so frequently makes our praise a parody, our worship a sham, and lays us open to the satire and cynicism of our foes.

Pushing past all minor matters let us ask ourselves this straight question, and do not let us rest till we have given it a straight reply: Where does Jesus Christ stand in our category of appraisement? Do we agree with the verdict

of history that He is the "fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely"? Can we say with Jean Paul Richter: "He is the Holiest among the mighty and the Mightiest among the holy"? Do we with the great Apostle place Him far and away "above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come"? If so, then why are we not to a man ranging ourselves by His side and seeking the ends that He sought? He stands for all that is truest in human thought, noblest in human aspiration, most symmetrical in human character, and most sacrificial in human service. His Cross stands before us as the concentration of a love that seeks through pain and tears and death to win our allegiance to the ideal holiness for which we were created and to which we have been redeemed.

Young men and women who read these lines, I charge you, if you would become your highest and achieve your best, to submit yourselves to Jesus Christ, for the gentlest and most heroic blood of all the race flowed through His veins,

and the noblest life was the life He lived for men. By our very praise of Him we shall be judged, and where we place Him in this world will determine where He will place us in the world that is to come.

THE SABBATH: A LAW OF LIBERTY[1]

The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.

—Mark 2:27.

ALTHOUGH I have consented to preach the stated sermon for the Lord's Day Alliance I feel somewhat hampered by the fact that my own early training was cast in the narrowest of all narrow religious schools. Sunday for me, as a little lad, was a day of prescription and prohibition from morning till night. I was always in trouble for violating some regulation or resenting some restriction. Even after my definite decision for God, the Sabbath was more a day of pious gloom to be endured with becoming resignation than one whose dawn was hailed with delight or whose hours I fain would have stayed in their flight. This, I came to believe, was quite the appropriate mood to cherish, and so any

[1]Annual sermon for the Lord's Day Alliance.

exhilaration or feeling of satisfaction that might have possessed me was promptly repressed as a forbidden thing—it was of the earth earthy, and straightway to be frowned down. Then, too, as I recall these days, there was a sort of melancholy satisfaction in having foregone and deprecated a pleasurable sensation. It sort of put me in moral credit, giving me a superiority complex which developed an offensive priggishness which must have amused when it did not incense my friends.

Now, it is very difficult to slough out of habits thus early formed. So much so that even now I cannot look at a Sunday newspaper without an involuntary feeling of disfavour and an indisposition to read, although I know perfectly well that as a matter of fact the so-called Sunday newspaper has not involved the hundredth part of the Sunday labour that Monday's issue requires, yet so deeply rooted is the old prejudice that in spite of all my reasoned knowledge to the contrary I go on tabooing the Sunday papers which are printed on Saturday and read without compunction Monday's paper which has

taken pretty well all Sunday to produce. Nor is this the worst aspect of my inconsistency, for I feel quite neglected if some reporter has not been defrauded of his Sunday's rest in order to take down and write up some quite commonplace remarks of mine to confront me at the Monday breakfast table from the *Tribune* or the *Times*.

Now, I have come to see that good and gracious as were the motives of those who handled me the method was all wrong. It was not in the spirit of the New Testament freedom which delivers from the limitation of the letter and the bondage of the law. I am perfectly sure that we do wrong when we seek to construe the New Testament Lord's Day through the Old Testament Sabbath commandment. It does not rest on the same foundation, and yet one feels that there must have been some permanent and priceless principle enfolded in the Fourth Commandment, whose relation is not merely local to the Jew but universal to the race—a principle, moreover, that finds free and more flexible interpretation in the school of Jesus than in that of Moses and which in our text is rescued by

Christ from the constricting hands of Pharisee and Scribe. One of the greatest mistakes that we lovers of the Lord's Day have made is that of interpreting the institution of the Sabbath as being even primarily a restrictive measure. This negative side of it has had quite too much attention. So much so that, like prohibition in another direction, it has provoked reaction against it which had it been rightly interpreted would never have occurred.

The Sabbath is one of the most beneficent and humane pieces of legislation for the lengthening of days and the enrichment of life that could possibly have been devised. It proceeds upon the undeniable assumption that man is quite other than a mere bundle of bodily appetites, whipped to his tasks by hunger and thirst; that he is related to another and higher world with which he must come into correspondence if he would not have his life cheapened and vulgarized by a too exclusive absorption in the things of time and sense. Indeed, it is doubtful whether even merely material things can be made to yield up their uttermost worth and unfold their inner-

most meaning to any but the spiritualized mind. For, after all, what is matter but spirit in certain modes of self-manifestation, and that we do not perceive it is because we are so engrossed with the material envelope that we fail to possess ourselves of the spiritual message it enfolds, for even matter has to be spiritually discerned.

This setting apart of one seventh of our time for sacred uses and in the interests of our higher nature has many advantages. It gives the soul a chance. Its regularity rescues the practice of worship from precariousness and from the peril of being pressed out or forgotten in the clash and clamour of other and conflicting interests.

Then there is something in the sentiment of having a common time in which all ranks and conditions of men with one consent direct their thoughts toward the heights from which our truest inspirations come. Thus week by week to loosen our necks from the yoke of the world's work and claim our citizenship with the saints in light is to remind ourselves both of our rank and of the obligations it involves. It keeps the

highways open between us and the great unseen. From these Sabbath heights our souls, swept through and sweetened by the Spirit's breath, descend to the daily round and common task freshened and reinforced for all the offices of life.

But, it may be asked, granting all this, may not the same results accrue apart altogether from the stated forms of worship? Is not God a Spirit, and if so, whence any necessity for localizing His presence in any cathedral or church erected by the hand of man? Now, we would be the last to deny the possibility of approach to the Universal Father from any spot that man may choose for the purpose of giving wing to his aspirations in Praise or Prayer. All who truly seek the Father shall surely find Him intimately nigh, whether amid the solemn mountains, the pathless woods, the running streams, or in the multitudinous music of the waves as they break the secret of His presence on a thousand shores. Much as we could wish that such out-of-door worshippers might find with us, in the service of the sanctuary, those healing

and helpful ministries that mean so much to us, yet we remind ourselves of the Master's teaching that "neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem shall men worship the Father." But everything turns on the mood and moral earnestness of the worshipper; for whether in solemn minster or in "forest primeval," to the flippant no revelation ever comes. Elizabeth Barrett Browning saw and said this with fine discrimination:

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes.
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,
And daub their natural faces unaware
More and more from the first similitude."

All of which brings me to say that the very spirit in which many claim the Sabbath day for the alleged purpose of such communion vitiates in advance any good moral result. Even Nature does not unfold her secrets except to those who love her so deeply as to uncover the head in her shrine. Love holds the key to all mysteries, and we cannot truly love that which we do not revere. Those who in pretence of worshipping Nature

whirl themselves off to her most lovely haunts, which they desecrate and defile with every kind of revelry and devilry, though they may meet with no positive reaction of resentment at her hands, certainly catch no message from her lips. To all such she stands in rebukeful silence. Like Christ before Pilate, she utters no word to the insincere of heart. For this type to pretend to any love of Nature is the idlest of all idle nonsense, and the only redeeming feature about it is that it is so shallow and palpable a piece of humbug that it could not fool even a little child.

What I desire to plead for is such a sympathetic interpretation of the spiritual value and significance of the Sabbath as will rescue it from being commercialized either for business or sport, lest the workers in every field lose the priceless boon of Sabbath rest and the many be doomed by the selfishness of the conscienceless few to a seven-day week of toil. Selfishness covets this day, avarice grudges it, purveyors of amusement and sport would fain have us spend it in a carnival of thought-preventing pleasure; while, worst of all, religious indifference is holding its

entreasured blessings with such a relaxing grasp that a not very powerful effort would wrench it away.

It may be safely inferred that the major part of the indifference to the claim of the Sabbath springs not from any deliberate desire to trample on its sanctities but from want of appreciation as to its divine origin and beneficent intent. Those to whom Christ addressed the words of the text had not a doubt in their minds as to its divine authority. Indeed, the obligatory side of it had been so stressed that the beneficent purpose of its institution had become obscured and neutralized by countless vexing restraints and prohibitions imposed by Pharisee and Scribe. Thus it came to pass that what had been designed and projected for the express purpose of alleviating the strain and stir of the world's busy week had become a burden too grievous to be borne. Our text strikes the note of deliverance from the legal bondage of rabbinical tyranny, freeing men from the deadening letter of the Sabbath law by introducing them to its spiritual and life-giving principle. Christ saw that this was the

only way to secure its perpetuity. Its foundations are shown by Him to lie deep in the very nature of things. His declaration that the day was ordained for man presupposes an organic need that it was framed to meet. This need was not merely local, racial, or temporary but universal and perpetual. Of course, if you take the view that its ordination was a merely temporary expedient as a reminder to the Jews of their sacred call as an elected nation, and with the tacit understanding that when their mission in preparing the way of the Messianic Kingdom was fulfilled then this, like any other provisional piece of legislature, might perish and pass, you will feel no sense of obligation.

If, however, you regard it as holding within its changing forms an unchanging moral element which alike in all ages, in all lands, and for all people is a perpetual challenge to the soul—calling it to disengage itself periodically from the things of time and sense that it may catch more clearly the vision and the voice of God, then you will no longer regard it as a possession to be trifled with or to be bartered at will, but as a

trust to be discharged and for which you must give account.

Here, then, is the sanction for the continuity of the Lord's Day. It lies in the perpetually recurring need of the human soul to set up and sustain communication with the Unseen. First, that it may come to the finest self-expression in the way of a full-orbed personality; and secondly, that it may attain to the highest social efficiency in the way of sacrificial service. The Apostle Paul makes the method of observing the Sabbath largely a matter to be decided by the individual conscience. He cuts it clear of the realm of "shalts" and "shalt nots." He claims the right on behalf of every man to settle this question for himself, and denies the right of anyone to intrude upon another's domain. "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in regard to Sabbath days."

As to what a man may do or not do, then, the onus is cast upon himself to decide, and if you will suffer it I will suggest a universal principle of conduct which, if you will but accept, will not only settle this problem but many more besides.

You business men, professional men, and university students have a test question that you apply to every proposition that presents itself for acceptance during six days of the week. That question is, "Will it pay?" In trade and commerce and manufacture you touch every suggested improvement in plant, in method of production and distribution, with the acid of this test. Will this raise the quality and quantity of my output, will it heighten the efficiency of my business concern and by so much increase my returns? The doctor or the lawyer views every proposal with favour or disfavour as it is judged likely to widen the circle of his clientele, always of course assuming that it can be undertaken with a strict regard to the ethics and etiquette of his profession. In the same way you who are students in any serious sense will require to know as to how far any course of conduct that is suggested, any self-indulgence to which you are incited, any social functions that may clamour for your presence, any sport that claims your interest, will help or hinder your graduation.

Now, why drop this test on Sunday and with

regard to spending its hours? The religious life declines to be treated as a great exception, to which the ordinary and common-sense rules of daily practice do not apply. Christ Himself was prepared to discuss it on the everyday plane of "Will it pay?" and Himself proposed it by asking, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Ask yourselves when invited to spend your Sunday in sport whether by so doing you can get for such spending a moral equivalent that will make the transaction pay. Will golf or tennis, boating or shooting on the Lord's Day enable you business men or professional men to add to your moral assets? Will you be richer in the values that endure and lay up treasure in heaven where neither moth nor rust can corrupt and no thief break through and steal? Will the loosening up and throwing off of all Sabbath restriction help you who are students to graduate with greater honours in the school of Jesus? Will it make you wiser and more efficient in turning all your splendid acquirements to account? Will

it make you truer in your friendships, more sacrificial in your service, more unselfish in your devotion to the public good? If you can answer these questions in the affirmative to the satisfaction of your own conscience with regard to sport on Sunday, well, then, go to it. It is your own concern with which no outsider has any right to intermeddle.

If, however, you would be perfected there is a still higher plane than that of mere conscience to which the Apostle lifts the whole question of conduct. That is the plane of Christian expediency, where a man, even if he found and felt that he could do a thing without bringing himself into condemnation, would nevertheless refrain if his action offended the conscience of another. This is, of course, very high ground upon which it would be impossible to rest any appeal excepting to such as are so absolutely surrendered to Christ as to be possessed by His spirit of self-sacrificing service for their fellow men.

In conclusion, let it be said that in spite of all that can be claimed for the liberalizing of the Lord's Day, its conservation serves as a hedge

for the preservation of the moral law and as such is linked up inseparably with the well-being of the community. The State rests ultimately on moral foundations—these foundations are laid in religion, and it is only as its religious interests are safeguarded that the pulse of the nation can beat strong or the tide of its life run high.

"THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH"

He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold I make all things new.

—Rev. 21 : 5.

THIS is Kingship indeed. What monarch ever attempted with any chance of success so stupendous a task as the reconstruction and renewal of all things within his realm? It is when a king attempts the work of reform that he discovers the limitations of his power and the strength of the reactionary forces in his realm. Many a young monarch has come to the throne with high ideals and sought to turn the current of his people's thought and practice into new and better channels, only, however, to find how little he has counted for against the traditions, conventions, and vested interests that have grown up and interwoven themselves with the very fibres of his people's life. The story of the better Hebrew kings of Israel and Judah is a striking comment on this fact.

Even where a monarch is armed with despotic power and is at least professedly solicitous for the betterment of his people, as in the case of the late Czar Nicholas II of Russia, we have seen how destitute of force a so-called despotism can prove. Many of us can remember his famous manifesto in October, 1905, in which were embodied the principles of modern Liberalism by which were to be guaranteed to his Russian subjects the right of national representation, free press, free speech, free education, and all the ordered liberties that Western civilization has enjoyed so long. We also remember how keenly these reforms were resented in high places, where overfed and underworked officials, steeped in all the corruptions of craft and graft, saw in the promised new régime an end to the exploitation of the public purse. This it was that roused these reactionaries against reform and played into the hands of the revolutionary terrorists who have created the Red Russia of to-day. It is the irony of earthly royalties that those who sit on thrones have frequently less of freedom than the subjects over whom they

rule. But the Heavenly Royalty who is represented as speaking through our text to-day calmly assumes the most absolute dominion, and in claiming to make all things new He offers to His vassal worlds the most compelling demonstration of His power.

Now, the claim is true in a material sense. It is what God has been doing all the time "since the gray beginning of years and the twilight of things that began." Every fresh generation of men, every new year's harvest of fruit and flowers and grain is simply a resurrection of ancient matter and its reincarnation in new and wondrous forms. The water we drink, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the air we breathe, the very cells of which our bodies are composed are being daily and hourly compounded out of elements which have been in existence ever since matter began to be. These elements have been served up countless times before they passed into the structure of our organisms, and as fast as we finish with them they hasten back by a thousand paths of decomposition and disintegration to the laboratory of Nature, there to be

recompounded and redistributed in ever new and beautiful types. The creative hand of Him "who sitteth upon the throne" is forever "making all things new." The vast procession of animal and vegetable life with all their wondrous laws, their marvellous adaptations, their gracious utilities, their innumerable types of rich and rare design, are forever streaming out from His infinite personality. His hand throws all the shuttles in the great loom which is ceaselessly working up the original and self-same material into fabrics fresh and fair. You remember the words of the Spirit in Faust:

"In the currents of life, in action's storm,
I float and I wave
With billowy motion!
Birth and the grave
A limitless ocean,
A constant weaving
With change still rife,
A restless heaving,
A glowing life—
Thus time's whirring loom unceasing I ply,
And weave the life-garment of deity."

This is a lovely concept, that the visible universe is simply the flowing and ever changing

robe of that Infinite Personality who dwells behind the veil.

Under the sceptre of this creating and renewing spirit matter is always moving up through man to higher forms through the coöperation of mind. What if spirit, after all, is to be the final form of matter! Matter sublimated, refined, etherealized, transfigured, by first of all being passed through vital processes into the physically organic, and then by moral processes through the gateways of the will passing into the spiritually organic, to issue in fair and fragrant raiment for the soul! Science teaches us that there is no more matter in the world to-day than there was at the beginning. But may there not be more soul? Are not the spirits of just men made perfect, an ever increasing quantity, and must they not, however highly or finely organized, represent matter that has been seized upon by spirit and translated into fairer forms! If this be so, then in this sense also is "He that sitteth on the throne still making all things new."

This is a graduation process which man of course may hasten or retard by concurrence in

or resistance to the Master will. Given His whole-hearted acquiescence and coöperation in the Divine purpose it is easy to conceive that under the administration of an intelligence that never falters and a love that never fails even our human failures and mistakes may by some overruling wisdom and power be made to subserve the highest good. Through their very experience in sin men may be led to throw themselves onto the side of right with a force of determination that otherwise they might never have displayed. Through the penalties of wrong, through the very chastisement that sets in on the track of the violated law, men get to see that the law is not merely an arbitrary prohibition thrust between them and the slaking of desire, but the restraint of eternal love coming between them and their moral hurt. Once men get to realize this they revolt against their sin and swing over to the side of righteousness with a loyalty that nothing can swerve.

Why may we not hope that just as damage and decay in the physical sphere are forever being repaired and renewed by Him that sitteth on the

throne, so that in Nature there is no such thing as ultimate loss or final waste, so moral damage and waste may by His redeeming and recovering grace and through the disciplinary processes of life be so neutralized and repaired as even to augment the joy of the redeemed. Many things that man once regarded as waste products and flung as rubbish to the void science has since revealed to be more precious than the things that he retained. Witness all the wondrous by-products of coal tar in the form of aniline dyes and precious drugs that have made for the reduction of fever and the amelioration of pain. Then think of the unsuspected value of pitchblende with its radium contents worth one million dollars an ounce and which was formerly carted away as refuse by the ton and at considerable expense.

Now, if physical science can take hold of these and a hundred other waste products and turn them out in new and beautiful shapes, who will dare to limit the possibilities of spiritual science in dealing with the so-called moral waste of the world! In our text "all things" are included in

the restitution and renewal. There are to be no exceptions. Christ is evolving a society that shall yet perfectly articulate the redeeming purpose of God. This is a process as slow as it is sure. In the nature of things it cannot be hurried, if for no other reason than that it has to deal with that most subtle and mysterious potency, the individual will. Only through the consent of humanity can the divinity come to its kingdom and fully display its power. One by one have men to be born into the Kingdom of God, even as into the kingdom of man. There is no other way.

In the world of mere matter the will of God runs unchallenged and unimpeded through all things, yonder bending the planets to their mighty orbits and here shaping the petals of the flower, but whether burning in midnight brilliance or breathing in morning fragrance, that will moves on unhasting and unresting. It is only when it has to do with persons that it is held up and confronted with opposition. It is the reduction of the human will to acquiescence in the divine will that really constitutes the most serious problem with which the Almighty was

faced. He had not only to provide a salvation equal to the necessities of the case, He had to discover the best means for getting it off His hands. He had not only to bridge the chasm which man's sin had cut between himself and God, He had to induce man to cross the bridge. Salvation had not only to be made possible, it had to be made desirable. There never was any reluctance on God's part to be overcome; the initial movement toward salvation has ever been from His side. Any theory of Christ's work which represents it as in any sense purchasing the divine love and pity for men misrepresents it. It is false to fact and an affront to the moral character of God. It is not that God loves us because Christ died, but Christ died because God loves us and seeks us through the pain and tears and death of His dear and only Son. Ours is the enmity and estrangement. His is the love that never falters, the friendship that never fails.

Now, it is through this love that the new heaven and the new earth are to be realized. Love is the great transformer. Man is to be loved into righteousness. It is love that makes all

things new. Once let a great and overmastering love come into a man's life and his whole outlook is changed. We see this again and again in the circle of our merely human relations. When a man really falls in love with Jesus Christ, not only does he himself become a new creature, which is a subjective change, but in addition old things pass away and behold all things become new, which is an objective change. He gains a new sense of beauty and order and value, a sense of appreciation and insight that makes Nature take on a new loveliness that to the unspiritual eye she never wore. But, further, this newly acquired sense perceives the ethical tendency displaying itself and winning its widening way in spite of, nay, often by the very means of, baffled hope and shattered plan. It sees the golden thread of a divinely progressive purpose running through and knitting together all the apparently unrelated and even antagonistic periods of history into a splendid unity through Him who sitteth on the throne and maketh all things new.

Because the Christ is with us still, because He has not withdrawn Himself from His church,

but according to His promise is with us all the days, our hope in the future is sure. There is much in the outlook to-day to perplex the mind and sadden the heart, but the Son of God is mixing Himself in with the conflict, and that is the hope of the world and the pledge of its final joy. The physical creation was preceded by a chaos vast and void, and the record of the rocks reveals that through mighty convulsions and cataclysms was this earth prepared to be the abode of life. Then followed age-long discords, with

"dragons of the prime
Tearing each other in their slime"

but all predicting and preparing for the more harmonious time when Nature should climb to her culmination in man. This primeval chaos with all its haunting discords, prophetic of and feeling after harmony, has been finely suggested by Haydn in the prelude to his great oratorio, and it issues in the glorious chorus, "The Heavens are telling." And this full and final triumph of order over chaos, of light over

darkness, in the physical creation finely typifies the end toward which the great drama of moral redemption and evolution is slowly unfolding through the painful years.

"With thousand shocks that come and go
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings and with cries
And undulations to and fro"—

These are all simply the prelude of a sublimer harmony yet to be reached, of a greater glory which the heavens shall yet forthtell, when

"The whole creation joins in one
To bless the sacred name
Of Him who sits upon the throne
And to adore the Lamb."

THE ECHO OF TRUTH

By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
—II Cor. 4:2.

THERE is a history behind these words. Paul's personal character had been aspersed by these Corinthians. In the handling of certain subscriptions with which he had been intrusted his honesty had been impugned. He was justly indignant at the suspicion that had found utterance and circulation. This letter is in part a repudiation of the charge and in the injunction of the thirteenth chapter, "Examine yourselves," there is at least a suggestion that people who were so ready to suspect others of dishonesty thereby betrayed a disposition to trickery in themselves, "measuring his corn," as we would say, "by their own bushel." The position of the Greek word "yourselves" placed before the verb indicates that upon it special stress is to be laid; that is to say, "you are very curious to examine

my accounts, let me suggest that you examine your own."

After vindicating his character in regard to this particular charge the Apostle generalizes as to his entire preaching and practice, claiming for them that they have been absolutely honest and scrupulously straight and clean. He appeals as in the presence of God to the eternal standards of truth and righteousness to which he is prepared to submit both his belief and his behaviour, his words and his works. He says in effect, "I subpœna your consciences, which are simply the inward and subjective counterparts of this outward and objective righteousness. I demand that they take the bench and, without prejudice, give heed to the evidence before God who holds the balance true in order that our conflicting testimony may be weighed in those incorruptible scales which will test without respect of persons both my honesty and yours."

Here, then, is the ultimate standard, the final court of arbitration, which must determine the rights or wrongs not only of this but of every case. It is the standard by which character and

conduct, yours and mine and every man's, must be measured and according to their quality be approved or condemned. This class of truth is not matter for intellectual discussion but for moral discrimination and decision. Conscience does not debate, it decides. A shipmaster does not argue with his barometer; he accepts without question its reading. There may be nothing in the outlook of portent to the keenest nautical vision aided by the most powerful glass; the sky may be a vault of stainless blue, the sea a plane of molten glass with not a ruffle on its placid surface, not a fleck of foam, as far as the eye can see, and yet the mercury falls, predicting by the depth and suddenness of its descent a storm of more than common fury. Does any sane captain at such a time pit his eyes and ears against the sensitive mercury or trust his reasoning faculties as against that warning note! He knows that though the barometer has no eyes or ears it can forecast the coming weather with an accuracy which leaves all human foresight and sagacity hopelessly behind, so that instead of trusting his senses as against the indication of

the mercury he simply and swiftly obeys and thereby saves his ship.

It is this swift and unquestioning obedience for which conscience calls. In business it is often found that "second thoughts are best." In parliaments likewise it is judged expedient to submit any proposed enactment to a chamber of second thought, such as the House of Lords provides in England and the Senate in the United States, so that the peril may be avoided of hasty and mere panic legislation. In morals, however, once we begin to debate we are lost, for ingenuity can always discover reasons that are perfectly convincing to the mind that desires to be convinced, and satisfactory to the heart that has already gone over to the side of wrongful desire. By appealing to reason in such a case the question is lifted out of the domain of conscience where it properly belongs, and is made a mere battle of wits.

The claim of right as against the clamour of wrong is no more arguable than is the silent verdict of a plumb line as it swings clear of a top-heavy wall and shows its deviation from

the vertical. There is a difference between uprightness in physics and uprightness in morals, of course. When a wall is what we call plumb, that does not mean that it is upright according to some absolute standard, but simply that it is perpendicular to the plane of the horizon. This makes it a purely local quality, so that what is vertical in New York and as to our horizon is as to San Francisco and their horizon all aslant. But in Christian morals, the uprightness required here in New York or yonder in San Francisco or London is one and the same thing, because it is conformity to an absolute standard, the everlasting righteousness of God.

Now, the feeling that right should be pursued and that wrong should be shunned is one of the organic instincts of our moral being, part of our original outfit—our moral stock-in-trade. This sense of "oughtness" has been wrought into the very constitution of things. It belongs to the very soul of them. It is this persisting and, on the whole, prevailing principle, that guarantees the permanence of the moral order and the final victory of good over evil, of right over

wrong. Conscience, let it be noted, never speaks in the subjunctive mood but always in the imperative. If there were no moral imperative with its quiet but insistent demand for conformity between conviction and conduct, there could be no such thing as security in the moral world. It is this responsiveness of the inner to the outer standard upon which Paul relies in his appeal. The Law of God without and the conscience of man within are thus antiphonal. Deep calls unto deep. They are correlative. They mutually respond; they presuppose each other, and each without the other is incomplete.

That this thought of correlation was in Paul's mind is clear from the fact that he immediately begins to speak of the eye in its relation to light and thus affords a striking illustration of the principle of moral relativity. Light, of course, without an eye to appreciate it would still be light. All the glory of setting suns, the beauty of dawn, the autumn splendours that fire the maples, kindle the orchards into flame, and turn the vineyards into a riot of crimson and gold, would still unfold their glories just the same,

even though no eye were present to revel in their beauty and no heart at hand to be touched under their spell into wonderment and awe. The mighty movement of the stars and the stately pageant of the passing seasons would abate not one whit of their many-coloured splendours though all unwitnessed by the eye of man.

But while the objective scene would suffer nought through the subtraction from it of the subjective vision, while light, as we have said, without the eye would still be light, yet what about the eye without the light and doomed to dwell in darkness? Surely here would result a tragedy. Deny the optic nerve the stimulus of the sweet and gracious mystery and it must become a withered thing. The picture is still outspread in all its rare and ravishing beauty and suffers no impairment through being unobserved, but the eye that fails to open on it, alas, is not so fortunate. It cannot escape the deterioration that sets in against faculty that falls into disuse. The law of confiscation holds on its retributive way, and we forfeit to the giver the gift that we fail to improve.

What is thus true of vision is true of every other sense. Paul has given us a universal principle from which we may safely generalize. The mind that is not loyally and continuously served by the senses and supplied with prompt and accurate reports from the world of physical sight and sound, touch and taste and smell, is thereby deprived of subject matter for reflection, for the reflective faculties must ever depend upon the perceptives for the raw material which they fashion into systems of thought. All our physical science is a generalization from our perceptions gathered from as wide as possible a range. Having marshalled and classified their facts, scientific men set about forming their inductions as to the laws of which they are the expression and effect.

We have faith in the credibility of the reports which are presented to our consciousness by the things we touch and see, and ordering our lives in accordance with this faith we are justified; running counter to it we are condemned. The eye, for example, reports a label on a bottle or packet marked "poison"; our im-

mediate reaction to it is avoidance. We are not taking any. We do not feel it necessary to confirm our vision by our taste. We take the label's word for it; we give ourselves the benefit of any doubt. Sometimes, it is true, we check one sense by another, thus getting the common verdict, a consensus of their separate judgments or, as we call it, "the common sense view." Ernest Renan, however, in one of his most serious moments warns us that common sense is a bad judge when it deals with great matters. Certain it is that moral questions are not subjects with which common sense is competent to deal. They must be handled by an expert, a specialized faculty, which we call conscience, and this word of Paul implies that every man carries about with him an infallible criterion of truth by which, when he sees it or hears it, he knows it for what it is.

This is a tremendous assumption, but it is hardly likely that so clear a thinker as Paul would have staked so much on it had he not been absolutely sure of his ground. But do you not see what an immense purchase on his hearers

this conviction gave him and what convincing power it imparted to his message when he was thus assured that wherever he went and to whomsoever he spoke he could straightway push past all the surface differences of language, colour, caste, or creed and find deep down in the moral being of every man, Jew and Gentile, learned and illiterate, bond and free, an internal ally that recognized and responded at once to the truth of God as revealed in Christ, whenever that truth was declared! It is the divinity in man leaping up to meet and greet its affinity in God, for conscience is but localized deity, as deity is universalized conscience.

Now against this combine there can be no appeal, neither against it can anything permanent hold out. Truth is the winning force in history. The lie is utterly doomed and damned, and to side with it as against the truth when that truth is revealed is to share its doom in a damnation that nothing can possibly avert or reverse. We array the universe against us when we play false. "We can do nothing," says Paul in this very letter, "we can do nothing against the

truth." But the truth can and will do something against us if we fail to range ourselves on its side and make its cause our own. It will brook no opposition and permit no neutrality. It will enter into no partnership with lies. Truth is not merely passive, inertly waiting for acceptance or indorsement: it is flamingly active and burns against every form of falsity as a consuming fire. It is aggressively positive and invincibly hostile to all that impedes its path. It comes clothed with the most austere and majestic sanctions and armed with irresistible might. It is because of this that it can afford to wait and patiently bide its time to strike. It has the eternities on its side, and if you and I are to win through to the end and be crowned at last as conquerors, we must strike hands with truth and abjure every person or combine that loveth and maketh a lie. For this we were created. To this end have we been redeemed.

Truth is the one and only thing that can fit into all the folds of our being, that can gather up and coördinate our manifold powers and focus them all to a burning and shining light.

Oh, if we could only see how ridiculous we render ourselves when we step aside to lies and trust in tricks. And we might see and know, did we but arraign ourselves before the inner court of conscience, where, by anticipating, we could avert the final doom, because the man who thus judges himself is on the highway of escape from the judgment of God. It is for this very purpose that conscience has been installed. The judgment within points unerringly to the judgment beyond. It is sternly prophetic, and never was prophecy more true.

The miniature court of conscience within points to the higher tribunal of the skies. It is because Paul is so thoroughly convinced of this that he so confidently makes his appeal. I want you to note that it is specifically to the consciences of men that the appeal is made; not to their predilections, their passions, their prejudices or preferences. Anyone who knows anything about the psychology of the crowd knows that a skilful speaker can play upon it at will, and under powerful emotion he can win a verdict from the many which as individuals they

will repudiate and reverse. Paul resorted to no such tricks. His appeal is not to the crowd but to "every man." He pushes past all the outworks and through every screen that would shut off and shelter the inner personality, and he pleads with the individual, the ultimate, the innermost, the essential man. And he does this "in the sight of God," judging that in His pure presence and under the searching light that beats from His throne there will be no dissimulation or attempt at pretence, because all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. The reason for the arraignment being thus personal is that sin is personal and salvation must be personal too, and so likewise is the truth personal that Paul manifests. It is not an abstract proposition or a system of philosophy, neither is it a set of rules and regulations for the conduct of life. Paul does not present his hearers with a beautiful code of ethics, accompanied with an appeal to the æsthetic side of their nature for its admiration and endorsement. Nay, his presentment was a Personality in whom all the lines of truth and beauty converged and found their

focal point, not a *something* cold and distant in its awful purity, like some Alpine peak of taintless snow, but a *Someone* close and warm and tender, with a human heart and brain and with human hands stretched out to draw us near. This is the truth done into human flesh and blood, the supreme truth of the ages, that fills and blesses all history—that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. O that you might receive it as it presses for your acceptance here and now because—

"It is the voice of Jesus that you hear.
His are the hands stretched out to draw you near;
And His the blood that can for all atone,
And set you faultless there before the throne."

CHRIST AND THE MORAL IMPERATIVE

From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.
—Matthew 16:21.

It is clear from the programme of disaster here disclosed by Christ that there was nothing accidental in the order of events leading up to His passion and death. This incident marks a new departure in His teaching. It is the beginning of the Via Dolorosa. From this point onward His conversations assume a new character and take on a different tone. When the thought of the Cross first appeared above His mental horizon it is of course impossible to say. Its vision may have vaguely mingled with His infant dreams, have sobered His childhood's hours, have pressed upon His youthful spirit, and have darkened the prospect of His manhood's years.

But this is the first clear and decisive prediction of the end. He had of course hinted darkly at the manner of His death—in such passages as: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"; and again: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up"—but these forecastings had conveyed no definite intimation to the minds of His disciples, so that this announcement came with such sudden and disquieting effect that Peter as the spokesman of the band expressed the incredulity and expostulation of them all when he declared that such a thing could never be.

This particular communication was made in the autumn immediately preceding His death. Cæsarea Philippi, which was the scene of its utterance, is in many respects far and away the most lovely and picturesque part of Palestine. It lies at the foot of Mount Hermon, which towers above it for nine thousand feet, mostly capped in snow, standing like an unsleeping sentry to secure its inviolate repose. It was doubtless for the sake of this repose that Christ had come so

far north from the scenes of His public ministry. Wounded in spirit by His rejection, and with all His friendly overtures flung back in His face, He sought sanctuary in the rest and refuge of the forest where, far from prying eyes and lying tongues, He might compose Himself with those He loved, amid the healing solitudes of mountain and stream.

Nature is a wonderful nurse, and in the silence of her woods or amid the rhythmic murmurs of her lonely shores, when our nerves are fretted to a frazzle she takes us to her breast, laying a cooling hand upon our fevered spirits and hushing them to peace. It was such a place Christ sought and found in Cæsarea Philippi. Those of you who are familiar with the Holy Land, whether through books or personal travel, will know that this is still a spot of rare romantic beauty, with rock and fern and falling cascade. The abundant water has made for a luxurious vegetation. Stately poplars, mighty oaks, sombre pines, with here and there a lovely cedar with its dusky arms outspread, all intertwining with a thousand lesser growths in a tangle of beauty

and fragrance, give to the spot a quite perennial charm.

It would be interesting to know whether amid such scenes as these and in the fall of the year the autumn season had anything to do with the wistful tone and trend of our Saviour's thought. Autumn tints are always deeply suggestive to the thoughtful mind. One cannot look at the yellowing foliage of the poplar, the splash of crimson on elm and maple, or see the oak leaf reddening to the fall without a brooding sense of evanescence and decay. In all these Northern lands where deciduous trees predominate you witness this yearly pageant. The setting sun flings the glory of death across the forest and the burning splendour of the passing year upflames as from a thousand funeral pyres. Cæsarea Philippi, when Christ spoke these words, must have presented some such picture as Browning has so finely painted in "Sordello":

"A last remains of sunset dimly burned
O'er the far forests, like a torch flame turned
By the wind back upon its bearer's hand
In one long flare of crimson."

Now, to a soul so finely attuned to Nature and so responsive to her every mood as was the soul of Christ such a scene must have been full of suggestion. Not only of death as symbolized in fading leaf, but of resurrection too, as figured in the falling seed, the prophecy and pledge of more abundant life. What wonder then that "from that time forth" he began to forecast the days—

> "And find in loss a gain to match;
> To reach a hand thro' time and catch
> The far-off interest of tears."

Clearly there were to be no unrehearsed incidents in that tragedy. So far as Christ was concerned the unexpected never happened. He foreknew it all, and this knowledge of the future added an ingredient of bitterness to His cup that we mere mortals have been graciously spared. That blissful ignorance of to-morrow which is the happy privilege of His humblest disciple was denied to Him. The mercy that kindly drops a veil between us and what the future holds in store He chose to forego. That future

lay before him as an open book. It is true there were tremendous compensations. His eye overleaped the Cross. He visualized the Gospel of good tidings of which that Cross was to be the symbol, winning its victorious way through peace and war, by dark and day, through storm and shine, to issue at last in the home-coming of all God's wandering children to the warmth and welcome of the Father's House.

And so, because of the joy that was set before Him, the joy of seeing millions of the race redeemed out of every nation and kindred and people and tongue, He girded Himself with courage for His life's great work. He seemed to grow impatient of impediment and pressed forward to the Cross. But the joy was not yet. He knew the part that each would play in the programme of His passion and death. He needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. He foresaw that Judas should betray Him, that Peter should deny Him, and that the entire company of His disciples under the spasm of a common panic would break up and scatter and flee.

The pressure of this coming sorrow, not only big and black with the hatred of His foes, but with the disloyalty of His friends, grew heavy on His heart as the tragedy drew near. Still nothing could move Him, no self-consideration could swerve Him from the path He had chosen to tread. Neither did all this foreknowledge of falsity and fickleness make Him morose or cause Him to retire into Himself. There was no air of aloofness in His speech, nothing in His demeanour of what the French call *distrait*. Indeed, so detached was He from all thought of self that even from the very agony of the Cross itself He could feel and express concern for other's pain.

But the point that I desire to emphasize is the moral imperative expressed in this word *must*. "He *must* go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." There was no option. We sometimes think and speak of God as though He were untouched by the laws of moral necessity. As though right and wrong existed by Him but not for Him.

This attempt to exalt God by making Him independent of law and untouched by moral considerations is degrading both to Him and to them. God is conditioned by the law of right as truly as the least and lowest of His creatures. This is a fundamental truth which must serve as a base line for the construction of any worthy working theory of relation as between God and man.

It is a necessity of thought that the creative process must have had a commencement, and unless we regard God as a mere empiric having to come to a knowledge of things through trial and failure, by observation and experiment like ourselves, then He must have had a complete working plan of the universe before the first creative mandate broke from His lips. Assuming that He was free to create man or to refrain, yet once He exercised that freedom He was free no more. Having called moral beings into existence He thereby created obligations for Himself as well as for them. These obligations spring inevitably out of the relations that He has set up and that He is bound to sustain—

obligations that as an ethically perfect Being He can neither repudiate nor ignore.

Now the primary relation in which God stands to man is the *Paternal*. First and foremost God is *Father*. The legal and governmental relation is quite secondary and subordinate. God first of all called man into being; that established the priority of the paternal relation. Then he placed him under law; that instituted the governmental relation and made it subordinate. Theology has tended to exalt the second to the place of the first, the legal relation at the expense of the paternal. To this has been due the modern revolt which has issued in the recovery and restatement of the Fatherhood of God.

The paternal relation is weighted with the most solemn obligations it is possible to conceive. God must have known the moral risks that His creative act would involve. When He accepted that risk He rendered possible the disloyalty of countless human souls. The creation of such possibility required to be balanced by the creation of a further possibility of restoration. And that God admitted the necessity for this

provision is clear from the fact that before the creative word had been spoken the redemptive scheme had been already prearranged. Hence we read of Christ as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The atonement, then, was no afterthought of the divine mind. It was a forethought. It was a provision to which God was compelled by the moral requirements of the case.

It is in the pressure of this compulsion that we find the force of this word "must." Having created free beings who in the exercise of their freedom may wander from rectitude God was bound by every ethical consideration to provide for their full and free return. No amount of sin on their part could cancel this obligation on His, or dissolve the relationship out of which the obligation sprang. Christ, then, was under the pressure of this law. He was this law in action. "It *behoved* Christ to suffer." From that necessity He could not escape. But He was not only under pressure of law but of *love*. *"God so loved"* that this force alone must have driven Him out to seek that He might save. For love

must suffer with and for the object of its regard.

Let me leave this thought with you: that God loves you; He has set His heart on you. It does not matter how far you have strayed, how deeply you have sinned, what distance you have put between yourselves and Him. He is near you, "closer to you than breathing." Have you been careless and indifferent, have you thought that He had forgotten you, overlooked you, given you up in despair? Never! God never gives up. He is the God of hope, and because His hope is infinite it can never allow His expectation to die. Though you have forgotten Him He has remembered you. Though you have wandered from Him He has been following you. He is always on the track of the sinner with healing for his wounds and with pardon for his sin. Just where you are, then, and just as you are, get down at His feet, tell Him all about it, and you will be caught up to His mighty heart, you will feel its beating, and you will know as you have never known before that God is love!

A CHRISTMAS STUDY

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.
—John 1:14.

Our theme here is Christ the Incarnate Word. What a word is to the thought it enshrines and is employed to express, that Christ is to the mind and heart of God. He is the Eternal Reason, the Creative Thought of the universe, the Cosmic Mind, coming to expression as far as that is possible in human form. All God's thoughts of love and pity, of tenderness and recovering grace, become articulate in the life and character and death of the Incarnate Word. Now a word, which is a mere vocable, may be misunderstood, is indeed frequently misunderstood. The thought with which it is charged and which it is intended to deliver gets sidetracked or in some way suffers such detention that though the sound gets through, the significance

is held up or becomes so mutilated in transmission as to fail of its end. But when a thought discards all mere verbal vestments and clothes itself in living flesh and blood, when it looks at us with kindly human eyes and holds out friendly hands, there can be no mistake as to its purport, and this is why the Word of God was made flesh.

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

"Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef."

The Incarnation was only a temporary expression and on the earth plane of what is an eternal thought and purpose of the Almighty Father's mind and heart. Just as a flash of lightning is but a local and momentary manifestation of a universally distributed electrical energy, so Christ's appearance was but the transient and local manifestation of a love that wraps the whole world round with an atmos-

phere that is charged with friendly forces and helpful ministries to all the sons and daughters of men. The redeeming purpose of God is thus gathered up and expressed in the unique personality of Christ, so that looking into His face men beheld the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. It was flashed to them from loving eyes. It was mediated to them through loving hands. "He that hath seen me," said Christ, "hath seen the Father." All we need to know about God was expressed in His life. It was done into history during those three and thirty years; not however that it might be then withdrawn and become merely a memory and inspiration. Christ came into human history to stay in it, to redeem it from confusion, to give it meaning, coherence, continuity; to furnish it with a logical issue; to justify all the agony and desolation through which the centuries have had to pass in their upward way, and to conduct them to their perfect flower and crown. He undertakes to do this through a process of perpetually recurring reincarnations and self-multiplications in and by His followers.

The Incarnation was inaugurated as a new order of life, a new type of humanity. Right up to Christ's appearance the First Adam stood as the Federal Head of the Race. The moral disabilities that the law of heredity entails on those who have had a crooked or tainted ancestry are everywhere recognized in the Scriptures as handicapping the sons of men. But Christ appears, and as a Second Adam is represented as inserting Himself into the series as its corrective and regenerative agency, restoring it to its original type and providing through the gift of His Spirit for perpetuating the active principle of the Incarnation in those who name His Name. To use the words of the fourth Evangelist, "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name."

This "power" or "authority" to become the sons of God is the power of a new generative principle that works savingly and successfully against the old heredity, conforming us to the image of Him who has created us in righteousness and true holiness. This is a process as mys-

terious as it is effective and though "it doth not yet appear what we shall be," yet in what has already taken place, we have the prophecy and pledge that He will work it to a finish, so that "when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is."

Now it is very much to be feared that this mystical meaning, this intent and content of the Incarnation is lost sight of in the festivities which gather round the period of its celebration and which tend to veil from view its deep and divine significance for the race. Our celebration of the Saviour's advent concerns itself more with the by-products of His coming than with the saving purpose it enfolded and enforced. The festivities of the season bulk so largely in our social and family life that we are apt to forget that the source and fount of all the joy which Christmas brings has to be traced to the fact that it marks the meeting point of heaven and earth, the outward and visible confluence of God and man.

Christ's coming in human form forever refuted the lie that God and man, that spirit and

flesh, were antithetical terms. It proved before all worlds that Deity and humanity might be included in one category and head up in a single personality. From the moment of His Incarnation the destinies of Creator and created were shown to be inextricably intertwined. Christ stands as the historical expression and prophetic forecast of this unification and as the mediating centre of exchange in whom and through whom every soul of man may come into conscious oneness with God.

The Incarnation effected two things. It typed the new order of life which Jesus came to institute, and it supplied the dynamic by which the type could be reproduced and done into history. This is the signification of the term, "full of grace and truth," in our text. It is not to be regarded merely as a cold historical fact that Christ was in Himself and for Himself all sufficient as to "grace and truth," but that he held all this fulness for the purpose of output—that it was available to any extent; that He could be drawn upon indefinitely for unlimited supplies. He gathered them all up into Himself not

merely for conservation but for radiation, for the express purpose, that is, of putting them at the world's call and disposal. He became God's chosen medium of universal distribution, so that when a man comes to Christ and takes from His hand he is literally taking from the very hand of God. Here, for example, is a great New York house of business with oversea branches. That which its agents in England or on the Continent undertake in its name is honoured here at home. They are the living links between the head office here and their clients over yonder. What they give their hands to there is endorsed here; and in like manner what Christ has given His hand to on this earth God underwrites in heaven.

Over against our emptiness has been placed His fulness; over against all our unworthiness is placed His tender and forgiving love; over against the distrust and fear generated by our sins has been placed this winsome, welcoming, incarnated Word, vibrant with feeling that mere vocables could never express or convey. Christ represents us to the Father and the Father to us. He is the seat and centre of spir-

itual intercommunication and exchange. In Christ God not only owns us as His children but He is proud to call us His own. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren"; and again: "God is not ashamed to be called their God." And the reason is this, that such ownership is the triumph of His grace. It is the moral victory of His redeeming love, that love which gathers itself up in such fulness and flows out in such freeness from the Cross of Calvary that it slays our pride, breaks down our stubbornness, burns out our selfishness, and humbles us into penitence and tears.

Through all the feasting and festivity, the meetings and greetings, the thousand memories both sweet and sad, the longings "for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still," there should be running the deep undertone of a profound and reverent joy. Underneath all our celebrations may there move the ground swell of adoring gratitude to Him who for our sakes was born and lived and loved and laboured and suffered and died that He might

bring God's search for us and our search for God to the blessed issue that will gladden time, give meaning to life, be victorious over death, and glorify eternity. "For this is eternal life to know Him the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent."

PEACE MAKING AND PEACE FAKING

Blessed are the peacemakers. —Matt. 5:9.

This is one of the hardest beatitudes to win, and concerning it there has been a great deal of crude misconception that requires to be dispelled. It is not blessed are the peace lovers merely, nor the peace talkers, nor the peace dreamers. It is not blessed are those who sit down under their own vine and fig tree enjoying all the blessings of peace and indifferent as to the rest of the world. It is not the self-centred and self-circumferenced security of the Lotos eaters' land that is here accounted blest, nor the spirit that cries:

"Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?"

. . . . . .

"Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind."

There is no necessary beatitude on those who are simply plucking the fruits of peace, the seeds of which were watered by the red rain of wars which they bore no share to wage or win. It is not blessed are the peace fakers but the peace-makers. Now this word "to make" has in the original a tremendous range. It covers every kind of creative and constructive work from the welding of iron, the moulding of brass, the carving of wood and of stone, right up to the production of an Iliad or an Odyssey. But in every case there is present the idea of creative energy and activity at work. Thus the peace-maker is preëminently the peace producer, and because war is so often peace in the making the peace producer may be compelled to fight.

There is, therefore, no accident in the position that this beatitude occupies in the series. The man who would be a successful peace-maker

must first of all graduate through all the preliminary stages from poverty of spirit through unquenchable thirst for righteousness to purity of heart. There must be the most absolute frankness, the most perfect sincerity, and no private or personal ends to serve. The spirit that makes for peace is the spirit that makes for righteousness, but the spirit that makes for righteousness is the spirit of annexation. It is the imperial spirit that cannot rest till it has made the Kingdom of God co-extensive with all the kingdoms of man.

This means the planting out, often in the face of deadly opposition, of the great principles of truth and righteousness, of freedom and fair play, in the dark places of the earth. It means coming into close grips with cruelty, oppression, and every kind of vileness and villainy, so that peace making is no mere dress suit and kid glove business. To achieve it, the maker of peace and righteousness has to fling himself in all the might of high-souled and resolute manhood against the organized forces of wrong and carry the kingdom of darkness by assault, yea, and

sometimes at the point of the sword. If someone objects that God is a God of peace, I reply, assuredly and precisely because He is the God of Peace He is the God of Battles and the Lord of Hosts is His Name.

Away back in the gray beginning of time and the twilight of things that began God is represented as generating an eternal enmity between the mother of all living on the one hand and the principle of evil on the other. "I will put enmity," said He to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed." The woman here stands for the ideal purity, for the sanctity and integration of the home life and through the home, for that of the nation.

The serpent stands for their degradation and consequent disintegration. These two can never be reconciled. A pact between them would be a covenant with hell. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of Peace for the very reason that it is the Gospel of War, ceaseless and relentless war, against tyranny and oppression, against every form of injustice and wrong. Its adherents

In this injunction of the text, the word "moderation" falls very far short of expressing all the meaning of the Greek term which he employed. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any single English word could carry all the weight of significance with which the original is charged. According to the best scholarship the word means what Matthew Arnold summarizes as the principal feature in the life of Jesus, viz., "a sweet reasonableness." After much casting about for a broad and inclusive term by which to construe what was in Paul's mind I have selected the word "chivalry" as perhaps coming closest to his meaning. It indicates that fine spirit of consideration for others which springs spontaneously to the help of the aged and weak, that knightly valour that will sacrifice even life itself in guarding a woman's honour or in shielding the life of a little child. This is a code of honour that is not written. It is as much above law as law is above the brute instinct of the savage. It cannot be imposed from without. It must find its initiative within. It is the spirit of sacrificial service that is begotten in every true disciple of

our Lord. It depends for its constancy and instancy upon Christ's abiding presence and power. Hence the Apostle hastens to back up his injunction with the reassuring word, "The Lord is at hand."

The word translated "at hand" has a double meaning and may relate either to time or to place. Those who favour the premillenarian view interpret it in terms of time. That is to say they believe it means that the second coming of our Lord is imminent. If, however, Paul thought and taught this he must be adjudged as having been in error, for in the sense in which this reading requires us to understand it Christ did not and has not come. I prefer to interpret the word in terms of place and to regard Paul as meaning that the Lord is standing by, a very real though unseen presence, always and everywhere available and at call, waiting and willing and wishing to be drawn upon for supplies in any and every emergency of life. So that here is the great rallying and reinforcing truth—because according to His promise the risen Lord is with you all the days, because He who is the

gentlest among the mighty and the mightiest among the gentle is by your side, with all He is and all He has at your call, here then and now, openly and before all men, enter the lists against all that is base and ignoble in the thought and practice of your times, "till the beast is ever less and less and the man is more and more." As He was gentle, so be ye gentle. As He was brave, so be ye brave. In a word: would ye be God's true gentlemen, then pledge yourselves to Him in knightly service, for the gentlest blood of all the race flowed through His veins, and the noblest life was the life He lived for men.

Now, if we can only gain and retain this God-consciousness, this sense of the presence and power of the unseen Lord during this period of vacation, if we can only succeed in breaking with every environment and relationship that cannot be made to minister to the higher life, if we can but resolve to forego all that will not feed the flame of sacrificial service, then we shall come back to our work in the fall in such efficiency that the weakest among us shall be as David and the House of David as the angel of the Lord.

I really chose this text on account of the word "moderation" which occurs in it, and because it would, as I thought, give me an opportunity of saying some steadying word on the threshold of our vacation, but this was before I had turned it up in the original and discovered its rich and manifold meanings. At the same time, I do not like to be altogether deterred from my purpose, and as "moderation" has at least the sanction of the Authorized Version, this interpretation may help to save us from being caught in the whirl of irresponsibility that generally characterizes the holiday season and thus help us to keep our heads. Perhaps after all "balance" may be regarded as the term that most fully gathers up and expresses what was in the Apostle's mind. Times of reaction and relaxation are always full of peril. They throw us open to temptations that have little chance with us in the working days of life.

Of course, our working days have their moral tests, but they come along a different plane. When we are released from the stress and strain of business we find ourselves in possession of

time that we are tempted to run to waste if not to wickedness. Life to-day is being lived at very high pressure. The demand upon the vital forces is so great that unless they are economized and safeguarded from overexpenditure our earthly stay will shrink to the limit of twoscore years instead of reaching its allotted span of threescore years and ten. It is an age of hurry and worry, of haste and waste. Whether we get through any more work by reason of the pace at which we move is doubtful. But it is hardly a matter of choice: we are not able to call a halt. We are caught in the swirl. The pace is made *for* us, not *by* us, and we are swept along. Whether we will or no, we are hurried breathlessly on from point to point and, protest as we may, we must get on or get out.

There is, of course, a kind of fascination in it all. The swiftly moving and many-coloured life, especially of our great cities, weaves a strange spell about the spirit. Our pulses dance to its music. Our nerves vibrate to its rhythm. We have not time to think: we can only feel; and the trouble is that we are not content unless every

day provides some fresh excitement, and we are prepared to pay almost any price for a thrill. The world of sight and sound dominates us. It tyrannizes over us. It holds all the gateways of the mind. It crowds all the avenues of thought. It knocks with clamorous hands at all the doors of sense till consciousness is drenched and drowned under reports from the physical order. We become to believe in no other, and all values are reduced to terms of earthly currency.

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not."

It is this absorption in material concerns that is threatening our higher life and that calls for some respite. These holiday pauses in the pursuit of wealth and place and power if rightly used give the soul a chance to breathe and to recover poise. They create clear spaces about the

spirit in which the shining ones may come and go between us and the great unseen. Medical men assert that the majority of modern diseases are neurotic in their origin. Our lives are feverish, overwrought, ill balanced, out of key. Our nerves are on edge, our tempers are set with a hair trigger and explode on the slightest pressure of provocation. Many of us are becoming difficult to live with—we have no balance, no repose. Whatever of courtesy or of gracious consideration we possess is used up in business and social contacts. All our smiles are expended on strangers, and when we reach home we are so bankrupt of sweetness and light that we react with sourness and gloom against those who love us best.

Would we have deliverance from this tyranny and learn the secret of abiding and transcendent peace? It is all the time by our side, for "the Lord is at hand." He can break the spell of these evil enchantments and make all heaven open on the soul. Let us cultivate this sense of His nearness. It will lift us up above all the distress and perplexity of our pilgrimage and work within

our hearts its miracle of peace. Men in every age have found that the Eternal God was their refuge from the stress and strain of life. Listen to the stately periods of the 139th Psalm and you will catch the breath of God's own cool and calm eternity:

"O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me.
Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.
Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.
Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the

night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Nor must this be interpreted as a fretful and complaining protest. On the contrary, David is rejoicing in the everywhereness of God, that no matter where he may walk his ways or wing his flight there step for step will walk with him, or beat for beat will wing with him, the unseen Presence, upholding his goings and guiding his steps through shine and storm, through peace and war, by daylight and by dark, till he should reach the Father's house. Let us "dwell in the secret place of the most high that we may abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Then, awake or asleep, at home or abroad, we shall be surrounded still with God.

DECORATION DAY

You decorate the tombs of the just . . .
You are witnesses against yourselves.
—Matt. 23 : 29, 31 (Moffatt's Translation).

THE entire chapter from which this text is chosen is a terrific indictment by Christ of what might be called the established Church of His day. With the searching inwardness of the moral physician He pierced through all the externals of religion and laid bare the inward corruption and decay. The whole temple service had degenerated into a thing of mere millinery and mummery—"a vacant form through which the spirit breathed no more." Even their decoration days were an affectation and by their insincerity provided a moral watermark by which to measure how far they had receded from the lofty ideals for which their prophets and patriots had died.

The long and lofty line of heroic men and women who suffered the loss of all things that they might make this world a more decent place

in which to live must look down upon us, if not in scorn then in pity, when by our falsities we thus play the fool. Whenever we acclaim great deeds simply because of the material advantages that have accrued to us through their having been wrought; whenever we consent to sit down idly and enjoy the result of other people's toil, careless alike of what it cost and of any obligation to pass it on, if necessary at the same price, we prove ourselves unworthy. It is only as we appreciate and appropriate, only as we see and seize the sacrificial spirit of which they are the fruit that we can vindicate our right to pluck and eat what has been so plentifully watered with human tears and blood.

Decoration Day thus becomes a judgment day. It reveals and accentuates the contrast between those who merely commemorate the great deeds of the past and those who wrought and fought for the faith and freedom of the world. When we lay our wreaths upon the graves of those by whose sacrificial death we have won through to our present unity and strength we are not only paying tribute to certain great quali-

ties which in every age have commanded the homage and admiration of mankind, but we are pledging ourselves to exhibit the self-same spirit of self-sacrifice in these days of peace which they displayed in the stern discipline of war. Otherwise we are guilty of insincerity in one of its most fatal forms.

A memorial day becomes a flame test by which our hearts are revealed and their inner truth or falsity laid bare. Of course, it is always easier to praise our great men than to reincarnate their spirits; easier to celebrate than to emulate. They lived and died to unify these states into the solidarity of a great and self-governing democracy. Our task is to educate that democracy in all those great truths and principles, those verities and virtues which constitute the elements of enduring greatness and security. All history goes to show that the stability and well-being of a nation rest ultimately on moral foundations—on its capacity for sacrificial service rather than on its naval or military supremacy, on behaviour rather than bayonets, on goodness rather than guns.

It is, then, to these great moral requirements that we must address ourselves, for even the most optimistic among us will have to admit that in these essentials we are sadly in arrears. Whether we are to interpret the frequent outbreaks of lawlessness and crime in our midst as volcanic eruptions disclosing some deep-seated and extensive area of vicious activity that is thus finding vent, or as merely local and surface disturbances to be locally dealt with, will, of course, determine our method of treatment. If, however, they are to be regarded as constitutional rather than local, it is about time the nation as a nation took the whole question into the most serious consideration.

We cannot afford to go on building into our national life the elements of conflagration, explosion and disintegration. It is only because the mass of the people hitherto have been law abiding, with a certain old-time respect for order and authority, that this country has been able to hold together so long and stand as solidly as it has. But there is no use in shutting our eyes to the fact that what is known as the "hundred

per cent. American" is rapidly becoming a diminishing quantity. You cannot admit such elements as you have permitted to pour into the stream of your national life without seriously affecting its moral quality and direction.

It is true that as long as you keep up your old traditions of truth and honour you may assimilate this influx to your own ideals, but even then you must reckon on certain resultant reactions upon yourselves, for no nation can seek to impose its ideals, moral or political, upon others without in some measure being in turn affected by theirs. But the fundamental question transcending all others in importance is : are we ourselves proving loyal to what we know to be the highest and best? Granting that we are all in the melting pot, let us remind ourselves that there can be nothing in the resulting amalgam that does not exist actually or potentially in the different elements that go to its combination. Here as everywhere evolution is strictly limited by involution, and we shall never get out in life and character, whether as individuals or a people, more than we put in, in the way of pure thought and serious intent.

These are the creative forces that alone can shape the destinies of this great nation to the highest and holiest issues. They are the sole integrating factors that can bind all the heterogeneous elements of our national life into a structural unity, making us as a people wise in understanding and swift in all obedience that we may be worthy to endure. Let us listen to the monitions of history written in blood and fire across every page, stressed by the ravage and ruin of civilizations that have passed, and reminding us that the destinies of nations are determined, not by the might of their armies, the breadth of their territory, or the millions of their population, not by accident or fate or caprice, but by national behaviour, and that in proportion as any nation becomes morally corrupt it becomes internally weak.

The judgment of nations is always proceeding. The supreme court of the universe is always in session. That is a tribunal that never adjourns, and from its decrees there is no appeal. There is nothing haphazard in the coming and going of nations or the rise and fall of empires. All are

marshalled under law. That law is the survival of the fittest, and the fittest are the morally best. Mere bigness cannot save us. Once we begin a downward move, our bigness becomes our embarrassment. We acquire momentum according to our mass, so that every step means acceleration in descent with lessened chances of recovery and return. Everything, whether in individual or national life, turns on character, and character turns on choice, for character in its last analysis is simply crystallized choice.

Chemically there is absolutely no difference between the lead in your pencil and a diamond. They both consist of pure carbon, but it is crystallized in each case after a different law. That in your pencil adopts the hexagonal or six-sided system and assumes a form free and friable and crumbling at a touch; while that in the diamond has crystallized on the octahedral or eight-sided system and is thus transmuted into an imperishable jewel fit for the brow of a king.

Now we have all the elements necessary in this country to make a great and enduring nation,

but these elements may be crystallized after a higher or a lower law. We are called upon to choose whether we shall elect the graphite order and build up a civilization foredoomed to disintegration and decay, or whether, made wise by the monitions of history, we shall follow the diamond order in our crystallization and through purity and permanence take an honoured place among the hierarchy of the nations, "a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of our God."

SELF-EXPRESSION THROUGH SELF-SACRIFICE

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

—II Cor. 4: 10–11.

THIS phrase, "the dying of the Lord Jesus," must not be interpreted as referring exclusively to His death upon the Cross. It has a far wider reach and significance. It must be understood as stretching back and covering His whole career. His crucifixion at the hands of men merely marked the close of what had been a continuous process of self-crucifixion. What took place at Calvary was only the outward and visible expression in the body of His flesh of what had been going on day by day in the region of His spirit. He had been dying daily. The sacrificial spirit extended itself through and saturated His

entire life as its everyday controlling law. It was the atmosphere in which He lived and moved, in which He thought and willed. Everything was tested by it, and nothing that could not abide that test did He allow. It was this law of sacrifice running like a scarlet thread through all His words and works that made the Cross a necessary and logical sequence to His life, its natural culmination, its purple flower and crown. It simply had to be. Without the Cross His career would have been incomplete. Every incident in that career, when rightly read, is seen pointing that way. Every act and fact in Christ's life presupposed and predicted the end toward which with unfaltering step He moved, till He was able to cry in the rapture of realized desire, "It is finished," and commend His spirit to the Father from whose bosom He had come. But that very cry denoted that a course had been run, that a life process had reached its end, that to a great adventure a period had been placed. It was all according to programme and prearrangement. There were no unrehearsed incidents in the series. The unexpected had not happened. He

foreknew it all from the first and predicted what would come to pass. "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day." Again, "Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again the third day." He was foreordained and self-committed to the Cross, before the morning stars were launched into space and curved to their orbits. The Lamb of God was slain in the divine purpose and plan from the foundation of the world. From this eternal purpose nothing could move Him. "His face was set" toward Jerusalem is one of the phrases employed to express the rock-ribbed resoluteness with which He was girded for the doom, self-chosen and assigned. He assumed entire responsibility for His death and affirmed that no one without His full and free consent could meddle with or molest Him. "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." And when Peter, sword in hand,

springs to His defence, He bids him sheathe his weapon, declaring that at a word more than twelve legions of angels could be summoned and would fly to His release. He was neither surprised nor dismayed at the turn events had taken. Nothing could disturb the serenity of His mind or the perfect poise of His spirit. On the inner field of His thought and imagination He had already met and vanquished the forces that sought to deter or dissuade Him from His life's great work. Thus it was that when the curtain rose on the last act in this awful tragedy there was nothing left for Him to do but to carry all this forward to its formal completion on the outer stage of action. Now, from this working to a finish, nothing could deflect Him, no self-consideration could swerve Him; one all-possessing purpose absorbed Him, interlacing itself with every longing of His mind and gathering to a focus all the forces of His life. He appears to be the creature of circumstance pressing from without, but He assures us that the pressure was from within. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be ac-

complished!" This all-absorbing, overmastering passion measuring the force of impeding difficulty could tolerate no resistance. His whole life, then, was keyed to this note of sacrifice, but not as an end. It was merely a means to ends that were to transcend the utmost bounds of human thought. He had set Himself the task of reconciling all discords in heaven, in earth, and in the underworld. He commenced by attracting and attaching to Himself individual men, setting up personal relations with them, getting them to fall in love first of all with Himself and then through their love of Him with His purpose and plans. A slow process, it is true, but an obviously effective one, because men will live and labour and suffer and die for a person when the presentation of a mere ideal, however fair and flawless, will leave them cold. Christ so embodied and beautified in His own person and ministry the principle of sacrificial service for others that men in every age have been drawn to His side. They have been proud to enlist themselves in His service, to drink of the cup of which He drank, and to be baptized with the baptism

wherewith He was baptized. To accept service, then, under such a Captain means for all time the acceptance of this law of self-sacrifice as the working principle of our lives. According to His own teaching and that of His Apostles we can successfully seek the ends that He sought only as we share His sacrificial spirit and practise the sacrificial method which by precept and example He taught. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." There is absolutely no other way. This is no exceptional demand. All the great masters in music and science, in literature and art, say the same, and so this greatest of all arts, the art of living for the highest and best, has its price. It requires us to place ourselves and keep ourselves under this high law of chivalrous self-forgetting service for others, to be controlled by it at all times, in all places, and to all issues, even unto death. Such a handing over of our lives to Christ's dictation and direction delivers us from the despotism of self. From being egocentric, we become Christo-centric, and with this new centre of course we find a new

orbit and live henceforth "not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again." And we do all this, observe, not by legal compulsion from without but by divine constraint from within. The kindergarten method of prohibition and restriction is thus superseded by the generation of a new life principle within the breast. Indeed, it is the generation of a new personality. It is Christ formed within us as a pure and purifying presence, so interlocking and interacting with our own personality, so absorbing and transmuting it, as at times to be indistinguishable from it, till like Paul we are able to say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This does not mean the tying up or drying up of any native energy. It is the calling of it out, the enlisting of it in the highest service. It is the unsealing of unsuspected springs, the release and direction of life's most virile forces into their appropriate and most reproductive field. This it is that marks the contrast and

measures the infinite distance between Christ's discipline of self-sacrifice and that of those misguided souls who find in it a value *per se,* who are forever submitting the flesh to pain and disability for the sake, as they think, of acquiring merit, when all the time they are in reality incurring blame through reducing the working efficiency of their lives. This was true of St. Francis of Assisi, and it is worthy of note that he came to regard his maltreatment of his body as a sin against his soul. Matthew Arnold has finely pointed out the spiritual extreme to which St. Francis had swung:

"When we see Pompeii we can put our finger upon the pagan sentiment in its extreme. And when we read of Monte Alverno and the *stigmata;* when we read of the repulsive, because self-caused, sufferings of the end of St. Francis's life; when we find him even saying, 'I have sinned against my brother the ass,' meaning that he had been too hard upon his own body; when we find him doubting 'whether he who had destroyed himself by the severity of his penances could find mercy in eternity,' we can put our finger on the mediæval Christian sentiment in its extreme. Human nature is neither all senses and understanding, nor all heart and imagina-

tion. Pompeii was a sign that for humanity at large the measure of sensualism had been overpassed; St. Francis's doubt was a sign that for humanity at large the measure of spiritualism had been overpassed."

Christ never preached or practised self-inflicted torture. He kept Himself and would have His followers keep themselves fine and fit for service. If He foregoes or undergoes anything, it is for the ends of service. "For *their sakes* I sanctify myself," He says, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth." "Though He was rich, for *our sakes* He became poor." This is the justifying end to which all self-sacrifice must be directed and by which alone it can be redeemed from the charge of waste. It must be for someone's sake or betterment that we practise any policy of withholdment in our lives. The whole process of self-discipline here described as the *dying of the Lord Jesus* is to be undergone, then, not for its own sake, neither for ours, else we shall find ourselves snared by a more subtle selfishness than that from which we have escaped.

In the school of Christ the principle of self-sacrifice always assumes some high and worthy end for which the sacrifice is made. It is not an end in itself any more than is the pruning of a vine. Fruit is the object aimed at—more fruit and better. This is the vine dresser's all-sufficient justification for his free use of the knife. It is to throw the forces of life into the way of bearing grapes rather than making mere wood and leaves. The very etymology of the word "sacrifice" reveals its practical bearing. The root idea is to set apart for sacred ends. But simply to set a thing apart and stop short at that is to stay it in midcourse and deny it a working end. Sacrifice for the mere sake of sacrifice finds no justification in the Christian religion. Any suppression that Christ calls for in one direction is in order to gain expression in another. It is a total misconception to construe Christianity as a system of restraints and restrictions. It is not the negation of power and initiative, but the summoning forth of all life's forces and their direction to the highest and most worthy ends. Sin is misdirection. It has thrown life into

eccentric. Christ shows the way of rightly centring it so that it may again be curved to its original orbit and swept to its appointed goal.

That which alone can give moral value to our thus dying to the flesh is the making thereby our mortal bodies the medium through which Christ's immortal spirit may come to expression. It is that we may find

> "His being working in our own,
> The footsteps of His life in ours."

He is described as going about doing good, not merely waiting for opportunities to come His way, but going out of His way to meet and take them by the hand. He stood over against disabled, dispirited, despairing lives, with large, divine and comfortable words, bidding them be of good cheer and filling them with a new and immortal hope. It was His utter absorption in this work which rendered Him dead or indifferent to a thousand other calls. You know what this is in common life. You set before you some definite object of pursuit, some goal of commercial or professional ambition, and forthwith you

become practically dead to a score of social, sporting, or other pursuits in which you once indulged. It is not that you condemn them or deride them, you simply ignore them. You have no use for them. You have become dead to them—deaf and blind to their attractions. They no longer make any appeal to you. When presented they provoke no reaction. They are as though they were not. You are so entirely taken up with the one great project in hand that toward everything else which cannot be made tributary to that stream of fixed and resolute purpose you are as dead as those who sleep in the churchyard are dead to the tide of business that rolls along the street. This, then, is my interpretation of this somewhat difficult passage. It is to have one's whole life so dominated by the spirit of the Cross that it will be just as if Jesus were still living on visibly, audibly, and tangibly in our mortal bodies and mingling with the world of living men. Nor does this mean withdrawal from the world or any break with its affairs. On the contrary we cannot live a full-orbed Christian life such as Christ prescribed anywhere else but

in this world of men. Where else, think you, are we to find any field for the practice of the Saviour's precepts of brotherly love and consideration for others if not in this world of change and uncertainty, among

> "The hearts that are broken with losses,
> And weary with dragging the crosses
> Too heavy for mortals to bear."

If we do not do it now there will be no chance when we reach the land where there is no more sorrow or sighing and the former things are done away. Here and now and while we wait these things must be done, if done at all. Now is the time and here is the place where the need of kindness and the deed of kindness must meet and coincide. I desire that I, as well as you, may be dead to a thousand petty and piffling pursuits that absorb our time and threaten to drain away our energies in worthless waste, so that the whole strength of our lives may be poured into some richly reproductive field of service for our brother men. It is quite worth while dying to the secondaries if we may live for the primaries;

dying to the accidentals if we may live for the essentials; dying to the temporal if we may live for the eternal. "For if we live after the flesh we shall die, but if we through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live."

THE END

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